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ABSTRACT

One of a series of 20 literary magazine profiles written to help faculty advisors wishing to start or improve their publication, this profile provides information on staffing and production of "Chips," the magazine published by Bethesda-Chevy Chase Senior High School, Bethesda, Maryland. The introduction describes the literary magazine contest (and criteria), which was sponsored by the National Council of Teachers of English and from which the 20 magazines were chosen. The remainder of the profile--based on telephone interviews with the advisor, the contest entry form, and the two judges' evaluation sheets--discusses (1) the magazine format, including paper and typestyles, (2) selection and qualifications of the students on staff, as well as the role of the advisor in working with them; (3) methods used by staff for acquiring and evaluating student submissions; (4) sources of funding for the magazine, including fund raising activities if applicable, and production costs; and (5) changes and problems occurring during the advisor's tenure, and anticipated changes. The Spring 1984 issue of the magazine is appended. (HTH)

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AN EXEMPLARY HIGH SCHOOL LITERARY MAGAZINE: CHIPS

Compiled by

Hilary Taylor Holbrook

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Evanthia E. Lambrakopoulos
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INTRODUCTION

In 1984, the National Council of Teachers of English began a national competition to recognize student literary magazines from senior high, junior high, and middle schools in the United States, Canada, and the Virgin Islands. Judges in the state competitions for student magazines were appointed by state leaders who coordinated the competition at the state level.

The student magazines were rated on the basis of their literary quality (imaginative use of language; appropriateness of metaphor, symbol, imagery; precise word choice; rhythm, flow of language), types of writing included (poetry, fiction, nonfiction, drama), quality of editing and proofreading, artwork and graphic design (layout, photography, illustrations, typography, paper stock, press work), and frontmatter and pagination (title page, table of contents, staff credits). Up to 10 points were also either added for unifying themes, cross-curricular involvement, or other special considerations, or subtracted in the case of a large percentage of outside professional and/or faculty involvement.

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In the 1984 competition, 290 literary magazines received ratings of "Above average," 304 were rated "Excellent," and 44 earned "Superior" ratings from state contest judges. On the basis of a second judging, 20 of the superior magazines received the competition's "Highest Award."

As a special project, the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills has selected 20 magazines from those receiving "Superior" ratings to serve as models for other schools wishing to start or improve their own student literary magazines. The profiles of these magazines are based on the faculty advisor's contest entry sheet, the judges' evaluation sheets, and interviews with the faculty advisors. Where possible, the magazines themselves have been appended. Information for ordering copies of the magazines is contained at the end of each profile.

CHIPS

Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School

Bethesda, Maryland

Principal: Ann Meyer

Faculty Advisor: Evanthia Lambrakopoulos

Senior Editors: Robert Julia and Alyson North

Associate Editor: Alison Foster

Art Editor: Eric Ostroff

"A writer is a god. His kingdom of paper lies before him, his magic pen, his power. He controls time and space: he controls destiny. None can hurt him, none can control him, and his power is forever pure. Satan could perish at his fingertips, kings could cower, magic could thrive, and the world could be tranquil. The writer shall rule until his book is closed."

--"With Respect to A Writer"
Anonymous student
Bethesda Chevy-Chase High School

Bethesda-Chevy Chase Senior High School is a four-year public school located in the predominately upper middle-class community of Bethesda. The school's 1,800 students are drawn from Bethesda as well as surrounding communities--such as Chevy Chase, Rockville, and Silver Springs--and represent a variety of social

and economic levels. The students at B-CC high school have been publishing Chips, their literary and art magazine, since 1937.

FORMAT: IMPLEMENTS OF THE ARTS

The origin of the Chips title has been lost over the years, but since the names of the school newspaper and yearbook refer to pine trees, it is thought that the name suggests pine chips, from the pine trees on the front lawn of the school. Measuring 8 1/2" x 11 inches, the 1984 issue has 96 pages, center stapled, and is printed on 70 pound white paper. The fuschia, matte-finish cover is illustrated with a black on white drawing of implements of the arts: drums, a klieg light, ballet slippers, paint box and brush and an orchestra triangle. The name of the magazine appears in white 54 pt. Times display type above the illustration, while the year appears below.

Within the magazine, titles are set in 20 pt. Times Bold typeface, text is in 9 pt. Times and authors are in 8 pt. Times italic. Photographs and artwork are included on the title page, table of contents, and credit pages. In addition to poetry and short stories, the 1984 edition includes a student script for a play that was performed at B-CC in the spring of 1984.

PRODUCTION: INTERNSHIP

Membership on the Chips staff is open to any interested students willing to attend the organizational meetings. The staff meets once a week after school for the first semester, pIanning and evaluating submissions. During the second semester, those students who have enrolled in an elective internship meet daily to make the final selections and design the layout for the

magazine. Editors are selected from among the internship students.

Evanthia Lambrakopoulos, who has been advisor since 1978, provides guidance in all the production areas, and offers suggestions during the evaluation and selection period. All writing, artwork, and photography are done by students, as are all editing and design duties. For the sake of expediency, and because the equipment was not sophisticated enough to train staff members adequately, paste-up work for the 1984 issue was completed by Miss Lambrakopoulos. Computerization of typesetting for subsequent issues will eventually permit students to complete this phase of production.

SUBMISSIONS: PAIRED WORKS

Students are encouraged to submit works for publication in Chips by means of announcements on the school P.A. system, notices in the Parent Teacher Student Association newsletter, reminders from English and art teachers, and word of mouth from fellow students. A box for submissions is placed in the office for any students not wishing to give their works directly to Miss Lambrakopoulos or other English teachers or for those who wish to submit anonymously. Some of the written submissions are generated by classroom assignments, but most are students' personal writing.

In addition to individual works submitted by students in general art classes, portfolios of some of the students participating in the Montgomery County visual arts program are submitted as well. The program allows students to work in

half-day sessions, concentrating on preparing their portfolios in sculpture, painting and drawing, and photography. Staff members select individual works from the portfolios for publishing consideration.

Writing and artwork are submitted separately, so individual works sometimes complement one another by coincidence. Members of the staff try to work with the art pieces, pairing them with complementary poetry or fiction where possible. If however, a student submits a written work and an artwork that he or she considers to be a unit, the editors will evaluate the submission as such.

Names are removed from works to assure anonymity during selection. Miss Lambrakopoulos participates in the evaluation process, but students make the final selection. Works are chosen on the basis of originality, style, adherence to standards of writing, and treatment of subject matter. Student works have been selected as finalist in the Mount Vernon College Poetry Festival and as semifinalist in the Presidential Scholars in the Arts Program. They have also received honorable mentions in the Western Maryland College Poetry Festival and the Nancy Thorp Memorial Poetry Contest at Hollins College, Virginia.

FUNDING: BUDGET CARDS

Staff members depend on fundraising activities to cover a a large share of publication expenses. Approximately 36 percent of the magazine budget is provided by funds from the sale of Budget Cards purchased by students to support athletic events and school publications. An additional 4 percent is provided by the

county for participation in the Columbia Scholastic Press Association. Donations from patrons in the commmunity account for an additional 4 percent.

The remaining funds come from other fundraising activities, including sale of the magazine. Bake sales, benefit music shows, and cookie sales are among the activities in which staff members participate to help raise money. Miss Lambrakopoulos notes that the staff members maintain an outstanding rapport with students, teachers, administrators, parents, and community members, and have done a "phenomenal job" with the financial aspect of production. The magazine is produced at a cost of $4.37 per copy for a press run of 700 to 800, and is sold for $4.00 each. Publication expenses amount to $3,000 to $4,000 annually.

CHANGES: BUDGET CRUNCH

Because the number of Budget Cards sold for 1985-86 was far lower than in previous years, the production budget will be reduced. Although all expenses have been met by means of fundraising, Miss Lambrakopoulos would, ideally, like to focus on editing and production of the magazine rather than on financial contingencies. Fortunately, the staff has begun transmitting copy to computerized typesetting equipment by means of telecommunications, a change that will reduce expenses and production time by eliminating the keyboard function of the typesetter. The time saved and the resultant computer-typeset copy will permit students to learn the paste-up function of production, making Chips entirely student produced, adding to the long and rich tradition of the magazine.

**

Copies of Chips may be obtained from:

Bethesda-Chevy Chase Senior High School

4301 East-West Highway

Bethesda, MD 20814

Cost: $5.10 (includes postage)

CHIPS

1984

Dedicated to Esau Motovich,
who for thirty years, from 1954 to 1984, devoted himself to B-CC
and the community and to *Chips* as Art Director,
in recognition of his many contributions and in
gratitude for his guidance and inspiration

Beginnings

Sprouting from the earth,
clouds of glory grow.
Immense is the vision
discreetly placed before our eyes.
A creation of life
within the wilderness.

—Julie Smucker

CHIPS

Mike Derzon

Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School
Bethesda, Maryland 20814
Volume 47
Spring 1984

Sculpture by Alejandra Abella/Photographed by Mike Derzon

CONTENTS

Tools of the Trade—Cover	Marc Straka	
Beginnings	Julie Smucker	2
Photograph	Mike Derzon	3
Sculpture	Alejandra Abella photographed by Mike Derzon	4
Drawing	Tony Acquaviva	6
Tell Me About Yourself	Sarah Jackson	7
Photograph	Phillip Klein	8
A Childhood Memory	Elizabeth DuPont	8
The Summerscent	Lisa Schoenberg	9
Photograph	Alexia Kelley	10
Art	Christina Kelley	12
Grandfather	Clara Cohen	13
Photograph	Phillip Klein	14
Candy Store	Lisa Schoenberg	14
Georgetown	Emily Kaufman	15
German Chocolate Cake Month	Miriam Klevan	16
Drawing	Linn Meyers	17
Photograph	Kate Kaminsky	18
Drawing	Christina Kelley	20
Princeton	The Dreamer	20
Missed	Milo d. t. Bailey	21
Drawing	Alejandra Abella	21
L'Essence de la Vie	Catherine Frazier	21
Art	Helen Lee	22
Salamander Youth	Milo d. t. Bailey	22
Looking for Answers	Milo d. t. Bailey	23
Photograph	Milo d. t. Bailey	24
Reality	Paté Mahoney	24
The Routine	Laurie Goldberg	25
Escape	Jenny Burris	25
Photograph	Phillip Klein	26
Looselatch Flats in the Case of the Scarlet Bow	Robert Julia	26
Photograph	Aaron Wilson	30
Plaster & Wire	Kate Samworth	30
Social Security Office	Emily Kaufman	31
Drawing	Julie Shannon	32
Mr. U. S. A.	Arthur Burris	32
My Best Bowl of Fruit	Chip Landis	33
Art	Julie Shannon	34
Talented	Elizabeth Miller	34
Photograph	Aaron Wilson	35
Rotten Fruit	Lisa Schoenberg	35
Contemplation	Michelle Parrish	36
Photograph	Mike Derzon	36
Oklahoma Dust	Alison Foster	36

14

Dreams	Tony Acquaviva	38
Photograph	Rhoda Bouma	39
Breeze	Michael Crosby	39
Drawing	Christina Biddle	40
A Momentary Vision	Alena Binder	40
Sara's World	Christina Biddle	41
The Carousel	Jenny Toth	42
Sculpture	Alejandra Abella photographed by Mike Derzon	43
Reality 2	Paté Mahoney	43
Photograph	Mike Derzon	44
Reflection	Eva Pollin	44
Photograph	Anonymous	45
Skies	Irene Hantman	45
Photograph	Rhoda Bouma	46
Debbie	Ruth Polk	46
Rae's	Emily Kaufman	47
to my friends	Lisa Schoenberg	48
Art	Timothy Chung	48
Edges	Rebecka Mevorah	49
Photograph	Mike Derzon	50
Pond Ripples	Miriam Klevan	50
Drawing *Based on Photograph by Edward and Cole Weston*	Christina Biddle	52
The Candle	Brooks Peck	53
Drawing	Christina Kelley	54
Tendrils	Emily Kaufman	55
Photograph	Phillip Klein	56
"Aujourd'hui, Michele est morte."	Claire Manwell	56
Little "Miss Havisham's" Dress	Jacky Arrowsmith	57
Drawing	Linn Meyers	58
They Live	Jacky Arrowsmith	58
Fitzgerald: Revisited	Jacky Arrowsmith	59
Drawing	Julie Shannon	60
Equilibrium	Thomas Mallan	60
Art	Julie Shannon	66
Art	Alejandra Abella	68
The Disturbing Tale of Dr. Sathoth	Chip Landis	69
Photograph	Milo d. t. Bailey	70
Run!	Irene Hantman	70
Rendezvous with Doom	Alex Mahoney	70
Horrorscope	Shantel Blakely	71
Drama Socket—Art	Marc Straka	72
Antithesis	Jacky Arrowsmith	72
Photograph	Mike Derzon	73
Nothings	Irene Hantman	73
Art	Christina Kelley	74
The Other Side of Nowhere	Eva Pollin	74
A Study of Wigglewok—Time-wise	Alex Mahoney	75
Wild Bells to the Wilds	Liza Engelberg	75
Art	Julie Shannon	76
The Monster	Mike Lowenthal	77
Art	Marc Straka	78
Stopped for Sarajevo	Anonymous	79
Art	Elizabeth Scherer	80
The Milky Way	Miriam Klevan	81
SunTropic	Emily Kaufman	82
Art	Marc Straka	83
Another Day	Isunji Cardoso	83
Drawing	Elisa Goldberg	84
Closing Time at the Pub	Clara Cohen	84
My Grandfather's Slippers	Leila Hudson	85
Art	Devi Koung	86
A Look at Hope	Clara Cohen	86
The Match	Lisa Schoenberg	87
Photograph	Mike Derzon	89
Art	Emily Stussi	90
With Respect to a Writer	△	90
They Call Me a Poet?	The Dreamer	91
Art	Eric Ostroff	92
Escarpment	Emily Kaufman	93
Art	Eric Ostroff	95
Window of Perspective	Jenny Burris	95
Photograph	Rhoda Bouma	96

Tony Acquaviva

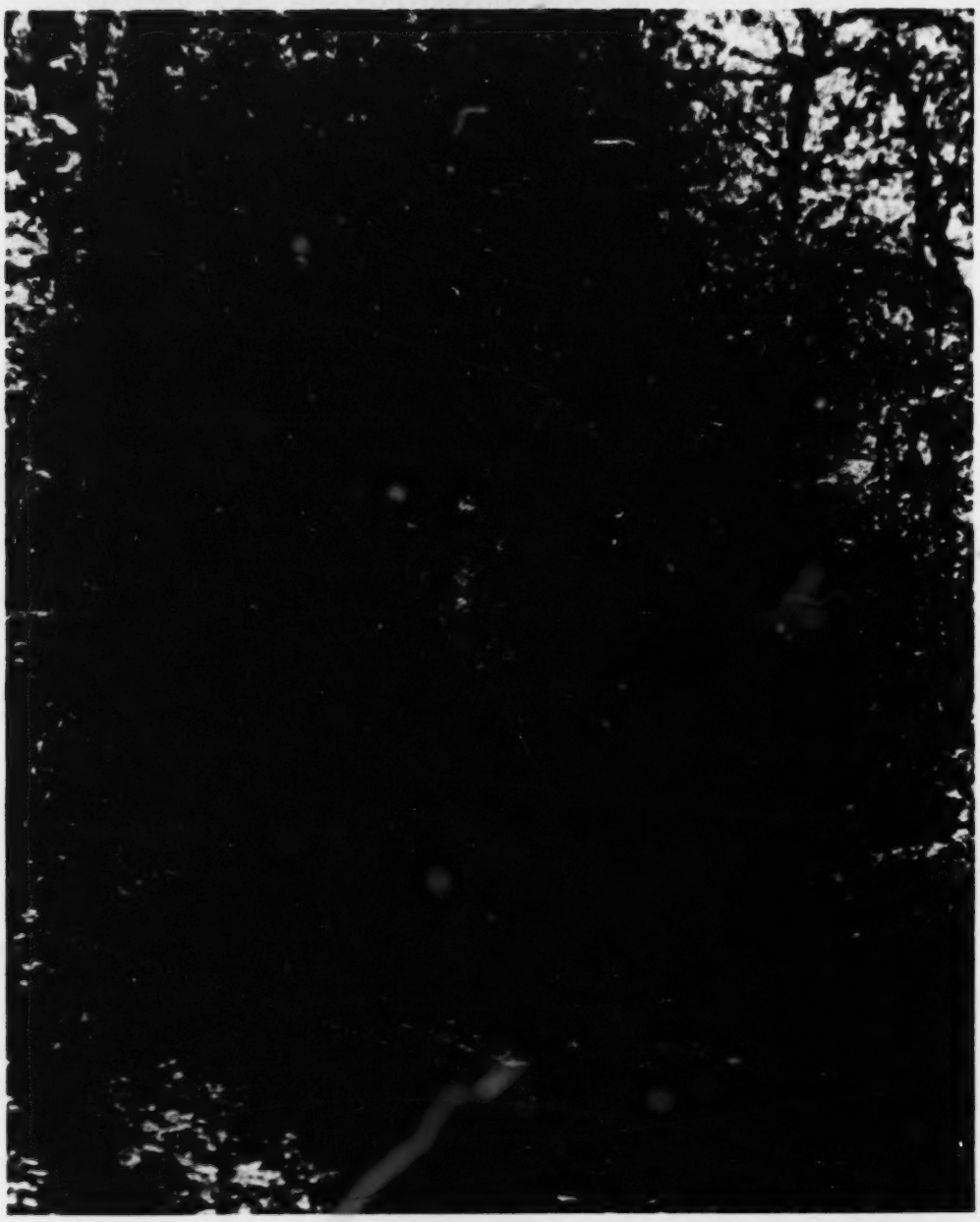
16

Tell Me About Yourself

Tell me about
Yourself, he asks,
Settling back complacently
Ready to hear the best.
I smile faintly
Gulp heavily, thinking,
What do you want to know?
That I like mint chip ice cream,
Or brush my teeth before breakfast;
That I've never been able to cry at movies
But sob through operas by Gounod;
That in my room a pair of toeshoes hangs,
Autographed by Gelsey herself;
That I read Camus and Sartre in French,
And still can't tie my shoes?
    And would it matter to you
    That I once drove two hundred miles by mistake;
    Or that I admired Golda for her candor and her strength,
    And because she once scrubbed floors,
    As I do,
    To help pay tuition for your school?

What would you like to know?

—Sarah Jackson



Phillip Klein

A Childhood Memory

The thick branches of ancient
Trees dangle to earth twisted.
Through the dim, dappled
Light they weave onto shredded
Soft soil shadows, shadows crumpled.
In the muted shadows solitude contentment.

Small fern green caterpillars measure
Time, a wooded treasure.
Warm, brown, sweet, a moment
Swayed through the branches—infinite.

—Elizabeth DuPont

The Summerscent

—Lisa Schoenberg

Years ago, in a room burnt at the edges like a loveletter caught in a fire, I sat on a huge bed with thick elephant feet and swung my dangling legs. As I rubbed my soft underknees on the tattery orange afghan, I dreamed of quilted grass and musty bee-perfume, and the trip to Charleston tomorrow. Mom and I were going to shop and walk there, in the sweet-smelling garden park beside the azaleas, and while I ate my supper, Mom had asked Nana to come with us. I closed my eyelids and scratched the mosquito bite on my leg, thinking how wonderful it would be if Nana and Mom and I were shopping together like a bunch of dear, comfortable friends. We'd stop at a lunch counter in the department store, look at the plastic-covered menu, and eat buttery grilled cheese sandwiches. We used to do that every Saturday afternoon when Nana visited us, before Poppee got sick and she had to take care of him all the time. Just me, Mom, Nana—laughing and talking on the sunnywarm streets by the river.

But Nana had said no, no, she didn't feel real well; she was going to take her medicines. Then she shuffled off towards the bedroom, where the television and Poppee's thick, garbled voice could be heard. I watched her leave and decided to go talk to her and tell her how much I wanted her to come. I could hold her strong, blue-veined hand in my two ones and let her brown eyes warm me like a ragrug patch of sun.

I walked into Nana and Poppee's room and saw Mom sitting in the fat vinyl armchair watching television. She turned to me and smiled happily, her legs relaxed against a cracking footstool. Then I looked towards Nana, thinking about laughing and bees and Nana's brown-spotted fingers as she washed and I dried. I looked at her sitting under the flannel blanket, propped up by white-flowered pillows, and it looked like she was trying to talk. She made a harsh sound in her throat. Fear slowly crumbled my whole body. Then Nana's mouth fell open, and she began to choke. She sounded like she was saying something to me, some very important thing, and she couldn't quite get it out. I glanced at Mom, and she was smiling at me playfully—the bare lightbulb from the ceiling throwing a shiny strip across her lip. My eyes slowly moved to Nana again, choking in a creviced face. One minute I was smiling, smelling the summery smell of bees, and then everything was violently snapping and splintering.

"Mom—" I whispered, unbearably cold. "Nana—" Mom stood up and moved to Nana's side, her face quickly fracturing as mine had fractured.

"Momma," she called. "Momma, are you all right?" But Nana could no nothing but choke and contort her sculpted cheeks.

"Come here, dear," she said so quickly to Dad that I knew how wrong this seemed to her, too. Dad threw down his newspaper and came to the bed, and talked to Mom while she held Nana's trembling hand, and straightened the twisted blanket. I fidgeted by Nana's speckled dresser, half ignoring their words and half grasping for them. They had the strength to stop this destruction.

"What is it, what is it, Mom?" I asked as they finished talking.

"We don't know," she told me, smoothing back Nana's dripping white hair. While I leaned against the smudged wall, Mom kept pleading, "Momma? Momma? What are you trying to say?" But Nana didn't seem to hear. "Go get a towel, Sandy," Mom ordered me, and I ran to the bathroom, over the flapping tiles, and grabbed the towel hanging by the sink. Poppee's dentures gleamed in a plastic box on the cabinet.

Mom carefully placed the towel under Nana's mouth, where she was dribbling, while Dad talked grey-voice with the hospital. I watched Nana slowly breathe rougher, not sure what I should do while she choked and coughed and spluttered. I looked over the rigid face and saw Poppee, watching from his bed, his eyes blank. Because his false teeth were out, his face pulled over his gums as he moved them around. Poppee's legs stuck out of the blanket uselessly, unable to help while he strained his back roughly watching, watching his wife get sicker. Nana might—go away—and he could only lie twisted on his side, creaking the hard metal springs of his bed, and watch.

I couldn't stand to watch anymore, because Nana's lips were cracking her face apart, so I backed out the door. When Nana's body disappeared from sight, I turned away, shaking, and walked to the huge elephant-footed bed. I fingered the orange afghan, thinking that Nana must have made it; it was full of her buzzing, lilting smell. I heard Nana's coarse voice and thought, why didn't the ambulance come?

I couldn't stay in that place, either, next to Nana's room, so I escaped outside to the porch. The street was dark and quiet as I looked down it, both ways. No ambulance was wailing nearby, no neighbor was hurrying to help. I walked heavily up and down the porch, unable to stop, willing the harmful silence to change. I walked up and down without going into the yard because Nana had told us that she had had to kill a snake on the porch steps with a broom one morning. That made the yard seem darker. Under my hard feet, bits of the old wood were wearing away. I kicked at the wood, and it splintered, and I looked down the quiet, dark road, both ways, and then I decided to go in away from the insects. And away from the threatening snakes in the thick silence.

I could see Nana's room from the parlor. The television was still flashing bright lights while Mom and Dad moved, saying one-two-three-now one-two-three-now one-two-three-now. My body trem-ored like a mine

Alexia Kelley

quake. One-two-three-now. It rang loudly, like Nana's chattering laughing sillying voice as she gossiped playcrossly with her sisters. She straightened the yellowed doilies on her antique table, her head shaking and shining in the windowlight. Her smile stretched strong and sweet as she sat beside me. Just yesterday.

Then I saw them stop one-two-three-now in a moment so painclear. I didn't remember just that it happened or how it felt; I remembered how everything was. I remembered seeing Mom slumped over Nana's body and seeing her shadow, thrown by the lamp, slumped over Nana's body. I remembered seeing Dad lift Mom off Nana and hold her while she cried and screamed.

A little later I heard the wailing siren and saw headlights moving along the wall, and the people came in with all their equipment and took over the house. I huddled on a sofa in the parlor, a magazine in my lap, very lonely. As the rooms filled up, full of crying relatives and white heads shaking, I huddled smaller, more alone, even more alone than in that moment when only I knew Nana was sick, when only I could know this would happen.

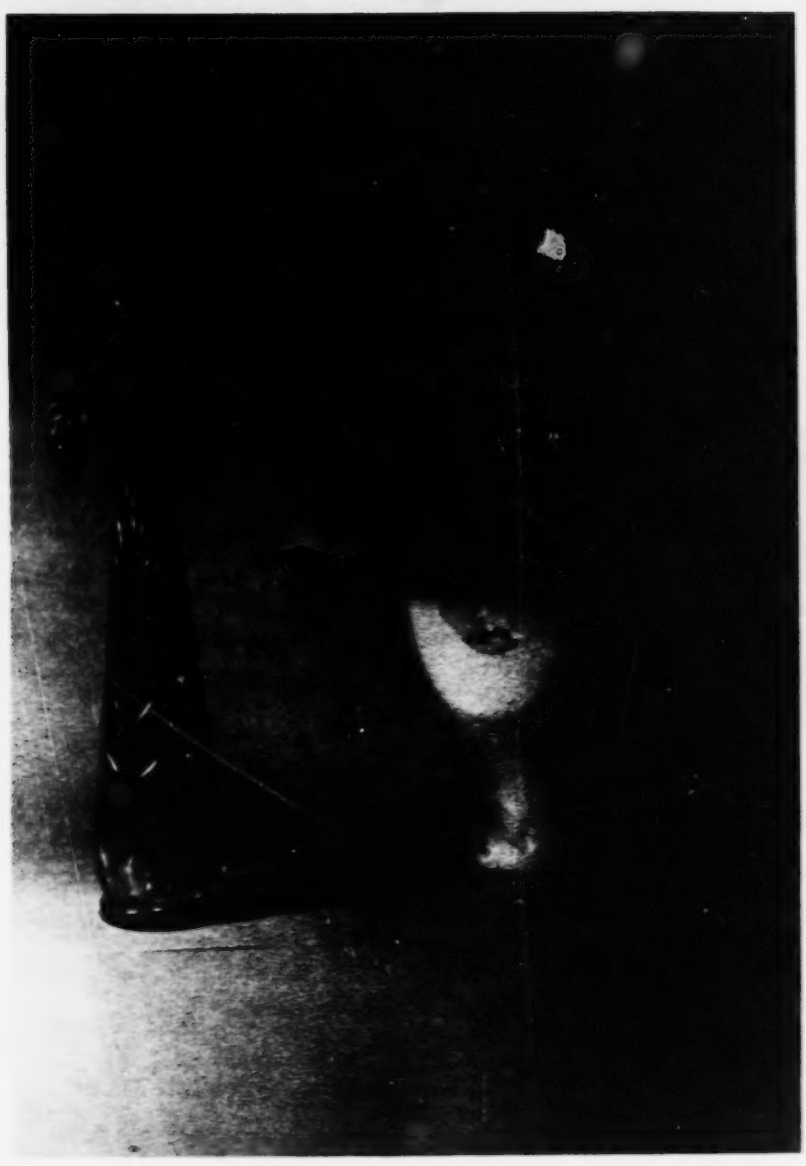
Mom's Aunt Penny came to take me to her house, and Mom smiled her bright guest smile when she said goodbye. I wanted to be with them, but with everyone talking to Mom, all the things she had to think of, I felt so far away from her, isolated. So I slept in a strange house, in a small bed with the light on, smiling at everyone so they would think they'd really cheered me up. As soon as the door closed, I hugged my pillow and thought about everything. Though I didn't want to. The long hours before it happened, when Mom visited with Great-Aunt Penny and we teased her because she kept saying she was ready to go and then still kept talking with Great-Aunt Penny while we waited. Slowly she edged out the door, still talking, until finally in the car she laughingly said goodbye, her window rolled down and her head sticking out. "Don't forget to come on over again!" and "Tell your Momma hello now!" were shouted as the car pulled away.

The new, hard bitterness refused to break into tear-speckles; it rigided and solided through the night while I hugged the pillow and blinded myself in the harsh light.

The next few days ran together like wet, smeared ink; I walked around in Nana's weedy garden, remembering how she wrote Mom each week, from before I could read cursive. In the house, dressing for the funeral, I saw Nana's jewelry box by her same bed, the one with the emerald-flowered bracelet for me someday in it. I remembered how she showed it to me and let me try it on and asked me how I liked it. Memories as exact as that, painful too soon, kept leeching at my mind.

The dress Great-Aunt Penny lent me was hot and harsh, and I felt tired in it when I went for the first time to the funeral house. Great-Aunt Penny hugged me and said I looked so grown up, and she said a few things that made me laugh a little. Then I went with Mom to see Nana's body. Mom didn't want me to see it, but she walked with me up to the coffin because she wanted me to remember Nana as she was in life, in her clothes peacefully, not as she looked when she was sick. For a few minutes, I looked at Nana lying amongst the flowers, but it didn't really affect me. I could still remember her choking more clearly.

In the church, red-faced cousins walked down the polished aisles to say hello to Mom, to hug her and



Milo d. t. Bailey

Reality

—Paté Mahoney

The bed is made, untouched for days. The trash can sits with nothing in it. Everything stands side by side in the cabinets; everything has a specific place. Each little kitten has its own place in the porcelain orchestra; the solar-powered beanie has its place on the wall. The room will stay exactly as it is now for a very long time, until the next holiday. There is something that stands out, though—one thing left behind. On a desk-top sits a forgotten glass, with just a little bit of drink left in it. The drink, once milky-white, has taken on new colors: green and brown. The glass waits to be taken away, and the colors wait to be washed down the kitchen sink. A phone balances itself on the radiator, unaware that no one will answer its calls. The books hold each other up on the bookshelf, with pages deprived of attention and touch. All of the furniture rests calmly, each piece hibernating under its own woodwork, each piece waiting for Thanksgiving when the floor will disappear again and chaos will inhabit the room.

ask how she was holding up. Then the organ started to play, and the minister said how much she loved us, how much she talked about us. I looked at my stockinged feet, moving my separate toes to warm them.

The graveyard shone green, and while I shook the minister's clean hands, a few birds flew by the open grave. I pushed away the dazzling summer, hating it, while Mother smiled as she wiped away her tears. Poppee leaned on Dad and Great-Aunt Penny as he walked around the cemetery, looking at older graves of other relatives. When we got into the limousine, he sat silently in the front seat, mumbling "good," in a whiskered voice when people asked how Johnny was doing. Finally, the funeral man helped me out onto Nana's porch, and Dad followed me into the kitchen where the other aunts were serving sugared iced tea and placing the layered chocolate cakes and creamy jello molds on the buffet to show them off. Poppee and Mom and I ate in the formal dining room, the tin fan spinning around at our feet. Mom cut up Poppee's meat and served his plate for him, something Nana always used to do. Slowly he began to eat, while Great-Aunt Penny urged me to try the artichoke relish and Mom asked me if I'd had some fried chicken. Then I took a glass of beer out to Dad in the yard. All the little kids were running across the grass and shouting, their frilly dresses and ties coming apart. A little cousin came and sat in my lap, asking me to come play with her, and I stared into her carefully varnished face, remembering a family gathering when I was little. We came in caravans of cars into the thick woods. Some of the older kids and I headed straight for the pool, even though it was early fall and the water was covered with dying leaves. It was so pretty, the leaf-covered pool in the middle of the empty woods. One of the oldest boys stayed under the water forever, swimming from one end all the way to the other without coming up for air, and when he finally did, I felt totally in awe of him. Then Nana and Mom came with woolen towels to drag me out of the slightly icy water, and all the kids played tag together all evening.

Slowly the people drifted out, the dishes were washed and stacked in Nana's cupboards, and all the leftover food was wrapped up in tin foil. "If you need anything," Mom's aunts insisted again and again, or they said they'd bring some canned plums or part of a roast beef or half a pound cake over the next day. It was what they knew to do, what they thought they should do to help Mom along. Then they stood by the creaking screen door; their powdered faces wrinkled as they hugged me and said how proud Mother must be of me. I received nothing from their kind assurances, because I was too hurt to give in to them. I didn't even know them that well, and all day I'd felt alone around all the serious talking and laughter. I just wanted to be rid of them, to take care of myself away from the pale, reassuring hands waving around me.

But not later, because it was my first night at Nana's since she died. After Mom kissed me goodnight and told me how glad she was that she got to see Nana again before she died, I sat on the elephant bed listening to Poppee's snore. Sometimes he would cough hoarsely, a long series of sputtering noises, and fear would grab my attention. Every time he breathed in, I would strain to hear him breathe out; the strain of it made my body flop heavily under the sheets, frigid and icy metallic. I was so afraid he might get ill, too, and his raggedy cough change to choking and gasping. Every second of that night I listened, my corrugated head in my red hands and my ears resting near the chipped yellow wall. I listened to the tinny fan and Poppee's snore and my desolate yawns.

The silence was so big and strong, like the strong bitterness inside me, that I tried to wish my great-aunts, my cousins, anyone near me to fill up the silence and the potent bitterness. The room was too huge, the bed too huge, and I was so useless; if Poppee began to choke, on this very breath, I couldn't really help him any more than he could Nana, lying on his pale, trembling side in his single bed. I could dart into his room and watch him gag. Only.

Nana's choking face flashed in my eyes, a clear, painful picture, and I couldn't get rid of it. She died. And here, in this room, on this elephant bed, she last smiled at me, touched my hand, fanned herself. She and Mom and I had looked at all the pretty clothes she had hidden away in her dresser, ones she made when Mom was little and ones she bought at a sale the other day. She showed us a blue dress with embroidered blue lace, and a red velvet skirt she sewed from some wonderful pattern. She'd bought four yards of the material and was going to make another one. She dug up a yellowing, ribboned nightgown and said to Mom, "This used to be yours, do you remember it?" I'd giggled because it couldn't have been Mom's. "This here's my favorite nightgown of all," she'd sighed and drawn out a furry pink one that I'd sent her in one Christmas package, because it had her sweet honeybee smell. She'd smiled down at me while the gown fluttered at a breeze from the window. Just the morning before we first visited Great-Aunt Penny, Nana had smiled down at me, her strong hands squeezing mine.

The memory seemed so far away and so clear at the same time. Each memory was so bound to Nana's death, so tied in with the pain that it wasn't a memory by itself. Never could be. Crying for the first time, I tried to loose my painful Nana-memories. They seared me because of everything after, her choking and her wax-body in the coffin. But especially because of the full-flowered grave, the memories should be kept sunnywarm; they should be cared for as what still grew live of that strong love.

When finally morning came and everyone was moving around the house, I rolled away from the wall and stood up, testing the bits of summer in the strong bitterness as I smiled at Mom. She was packing and sorting a lot of Nana's things, and especially the silver and china because Poppee wouldn't need them. She found lots of old stuff she remembered, and showed to me, letters and birthday cards and photographs. Then Great-Aunt Penny came over in the afternoon to bring us some things to take home, and to keep Poppee company right after we left that evening. I gingerly watched Poppee sitting upright at the kitchen table, while he asked me confused questions about school and friends. I was so afraid of him, his power to die and hurt Mom and me, that I could hardly say anything besides goodbye, Poppee. Finally we took Great-Aunt Penny's fresh jars of honey and put them with the boxes and suitcases in the back of our car. It was such a relief to pull out of the driveway, scattering old leaves and dirt, wave goodbye one last time to Great-Aunt Penny and Poppee, and leave behind the full-shingled house where Nana's life hung like sweet summerscent in the dusty dusk.

Christina Kelley

Grandfather

—Clara Cohen

His surgeon's hands had begun to tremble. He was small and shrunken in the warm flannel shirts he always wore. Even his blue eyes were losing their sparkle.

It wasn't the same man who had written all those eloquent little letters, who had had a passing fancy for making his own pottery and had given us boxes and boxes of tea cups and cocoa mugs. He was a different man from the one who had sent us hens-and-chickens to plant on our hillside, and who wouldn't allow a repairman to set foot in his house because he fixed everything himself.

Grandfather was now like a lost and confused child to be comforted and held. He often rambled aimlessly around the house. "I can't remember this, Mary," he would complain to his wife. "Where do we keep this?"

We spent most of our time with our grandparents that summer. Every morning we shared toast and jam in their cozy breakfast nook. We brought out the croquet set from the garage and played on Grandfather's beautiful lawn while we ate cookies and drank ginger ale.

He showed us his cabinet filled with Sung rice bowls. He had excavated the bowls himself from ancient trash pits in China. Then he showed us some of his own pottery, with which he had tried to imitate the perfect glaze consistency and shape of the older bowls. They were round and smooth and were covered with shiny, black glaze. "They're so nice to hold," he remarked as he cradled one of them in his hands.

We were down in the basement one afternoon, looking at the pictures on some old calendars. I noticed that he had sold his potter's wheel. He began to talk about the family that had raised him. My grandfather had not exactly been an orphan, but his father had been away from home so often that he had been placed in the care of another family for most of his childhood. He had grown up with that family's son. "They gave me a tool chest once," he was saying, ". . . but . . . *he* had always wanted a tool chest. He always wanted that tool chest. Then, many years later, someone gave him a beautiful set of tools to call his own. 'It's just what I've always wanted,' he said, 'just what I've always wanted!' . . . And then . . . then . . . he died." He began to cry.

Phillip Klein

Candy Store

The air smelled of cheap, crumbly gum
And comic books from the rack in the corner.
Three boys giggled, reading *Spiderman*.
Dust floated down the aisles like gray ant balloons
Filled with helium.
The sun shimmered through the storefront
Pasted with Easter-egg-colored advertisements.
Beyond, kids sat on the curb,
Sandalled feet dangling in dust,
Eating chocolate bars.
My legs goosebumped
As I walked past frozen foods
And took a bottle of root beer
With sunshine lurking near the bottom.
The floor rattled—hollow, dry wood
Like the wooden air.
The huge eye near the ceiling
Worlded the room in its mirrored half-sphere.
I measured out green pennies to the man
Smoking a cigarette behind the cash register
And hit the sunlight
Like a fly hitting a screen.

—Lisa Schoenberg

Georgetown

remember our trips
to the ice cream shop
on the crowded,
beautiful street
running straight
through the colorful,
seductive throngs
of rose vendors,
Italian shoemakers,
and sidewalk chefs.
I remember
the shop being busy,
and about as famous as its
"famous hours,"
and the smudged formica top
on the stained wood counter;
ice cream flavors
Chocolate Mousse
Cinnamon
Peach Melba
are chalked in orange every day
on a hanging blackboard
not unlike a schoolroom.
once when we visited the ballpark
across the boulevard
crawling with BMW's
and shiny red Thunderbirds
the wind howled and blew your hat off,
and I slipped
on the wet, green grass,
my oreo ice cream cone
tumbling to the ground

—Emily Kaufman

German Chocolate Cake Month

—Miriam Klevan

George sweeps the floor every morning. He begins behind the back counter, brushing the dirt and crumbs into a little pile which he then gathers up in a dustpan. He sweeps behind the main counter in the same way, with short, slowly paced strokes, fussily getting each spot perfectly clean before he moves on. He makes a pile and then goes to the customer waiting area, where he sweeps under the orange chairs and around the plastic trash cans, condensing his final pile. His wife, Irene, thinks that George should get one of the kids who work in the store to sweep after they close up at night, but George prefers to sweep in the morning when the sun is out, enjoying the early morning brightness and feelings of contentment. He doesn't care if the early customers sometimes interrupt his work, accidentally stepping in his piles of dust.

Irene takes the tops off the ice cream bins every morning and makes sure the kids have done a good job of cleaning the counters, appliances, and sinks the night before. Usually she has to go over the chrome and glass quickly with a wet rag. She then checks the mail, which comes early to this Baskin-Robbins, at nine-thirty or ten in the morning, and calls George over to look at anything important, such as bills or policy change notices from Regional Management, or ads for send-away bargains.

George sometimes just stares at her for a moment when she hands him the mail. George admires Irene still—her beauty, her knowledge of three languages (English, Arabic, and Hebrew). Irene is servilely superior to George. When she first came to America, her name was much longer and more beautiful, but she changed it because George couldn't pronounce it correctly. Now she has Arabic friends who call her by her real name, and she does not bother hiding it from George. Irene secretly thinks dreamers are not worth anything if they do not turn their dreams into reality.

George has no interest in turning dreams into reality: he is content with managing two Baskin-Robbins, he and his wife working in one to eliminate the expense of having two more workers. He doesn't mind it, and Irene has never complained about the hard work, perhaps because George is so pointedly content. In the evenings, while Irene makes dinner, George sits in his nubby brown armchair watching T.V. and shouts to her about how wonderful it is to be able to relax, how the great thing about Baskin-Robbins is that they don't have to take home work, like those bank executives and lawyers do. Irene wants to mutter that those lawyers' wives have maids, but she does not. She is greatly indebted to George. He had, after all, married her and given her a job in a country in which she knew no one.

At the end of every month a packet comes containing the flavor lists for the following month, and George sets the lists into the tray that sits by every Baskin-Robbins cash register. George gets a kick out of seeing the new flavors and reading their funny names, like "Double Dribble Ripple," "Decathalamon," and "Almond Bon Bon." He gets especially excited when it is a German Chocolate Cake month, because that means he will see Myrna. Although he cannot remember the first time he met Myrna, he will always remember the first time he was able to anticipate what she would ask for. . .

It was the middle of March, and she had been coming in for a week. She was wearing black warm-up pants, a red sweatshirt, and electric blue mittens. George thought she was very pretty, noting the sweetness of her face, the freckles, the round blue eyes, the pixie haircut. George realized that probably neither she nor the boys her age thought of her, pale and thin, as attractive. George had been very pale and scrawny at her age, part of the only white family in a poor, black neighborhood. His neighbors always seemed very strong and large and vibrant, and while they always greeted him with "Hi there's" and "Hey buddy's," he was not one of them. He used to sit on the only wooden fence around and watch the other guys play basketball and touch football on the school blacktop. No one ever noticed him, and he was content with just watching. (Even now, when Irene and her friends chattered in Arabic, they never noticed as he sat among them listening to their foreign sounds.)

"I'd like—" Myrna began.

"A pint of German Chocolate Cake, no top, just a spoon," George interrupted. "Right?"

"Right." Their laughter mingled with the sound of change—exact change, $1.62—on the counter. George felt a certain paternal warmth toward the skinny little red-nosed, black-haired teenager. His own daughter had stopped laughing with him the instant she had reached adolescence.

George packed the ice cream, weighed it, and handed it to the girl.

"Thanks." Her spoon dipped quickly and greedily into the ice cream, and she skipped into one of the plastic, orange desk-chairs and pretzeled herself into it, holding open a book with her knees, leaving her hands free to hold the ice cream. The book was *Sweet Savage Love* by Rosemary Rodgers. When she had finished the pint, she threw the container away, picked up her knapsack, and left the store still reading.

She came quite often, a very thin girl consuming very large quantities of ice cream, but now she needed only to smile at him and George knew she meant, "Pint of German Chocolate Cake, please, no top, just a spoon." His fatherly feeling toward her grew; he imagined her parents to be divorced and her mother to be small and thin, as she was. Once Myrna let an "A" test paper slip from her knapsack when she heaved the overflowing pack on the counter. George retrieved the paper for her, stifling the impulse to say, "That's my girl!" and congratulate her on the grade. Until he overheard her name, he had habitually thought of her as "my girl" and missed her during the months that Baskin-Robbins didn't offer German Chocolate Cake ice cream. He worried about her, too: she was so elastic; she looked as though she took risks with her body. He was sure her parents

Linn Meyers

must have worried about the daring games she must have played as a child, perhaps seeing who could jump off the highest ledge or hanging by her knees on a jungle gym and swinging off. She was a dancer, a fact he found out the day he discovered her name.

The day that he overheard her name, Myrna had come in, sweating, with a friend. It was the first time she had brought a friend with her to the store, and George realized he was nervous. What if "his girl's" friend didn't like him?

"God, that class was rough," the strange girl said.

"Yeah, and she said she was going to give us a new routine tomorrow," "his girl" said. "Pint of German Chocolate Cake, please, no cover, just a spoon."

"Jesus, Myrna," her friend had said, "for a dancer you sure eat a lot."

"Well, it's not like we were doing ballet or anything," Myrna said sullenly. "There are lots of fat jazz dancers."

George was surprised at the anger with which Myrna had responded to her friend. Could "his girl"—so skinny, so lithe—could she possibly be worried about being too fat?

He had tried unsuccessfully to broach the idea with Irene that same night over a dinner of green pepper omelettes, creamed corn, and iced tea.

"It seems as if teenage girls these days are always trying to lose weight," he said.

"Um-hum," Irene answered.

"Lucy would complain about it, and she was very thin," he pointed out.

"I wish Lucy would write to us," Irene said. "Only in America would a daughter desert her parents so completely."

"Um-hum," George said.

Perhaps George should have approached the subject in a different way—perhaps they should have discussed Myrna on one of the evenings, now rare, when they made popcorn and sat in front of the T.V. talking about customers, telling who they liked and who they disliked. Of the regulars, George was tired of one couple in particular—a red-faced, business-suited man who George had decided was a banker and the giggly girl who George assumed was his secretary. Irene privately thought they were rather glamorous. Bankers seemed the epitome of success to her.

George also disliked the bony woman who came in every morning after playing racquetball and ordered French vanilla ice cream.

(George knew the woman played racquetball because once she had bumped into a neighbor of hers, who had asked, "What are you doing here so early in the morning?"

The very bony woman had replied, "I come every morning after I play racquetball at the health club."

"Oh," the neighbor had said. "Who do you play with?"

"I play by myself," the very bony woman had said.)

George disliked her and never interrupted her order to say, "Let me guess. One scoop of French vanilla in a sugar cone, right?"

One of the customers both George and Irene liked was the pretty young mother who came in with her two clean, well-behaved toddlers. Their own daughter had never been very well behaved, and now that she had children, George suspected that they, too, were ill behaved. They lived in Canada, and George and Irene had seen them only once, during a Christmas long past. They received a card from their daughter each December, and sometimes she sent pictures of her boys.

Kate Kaminsky

Irene always smiled broadly at the well-behaved children when they came into the store, but George liked to play grandfather to them. He told them how big they were, said to the boy that he was a young gentleman and to the girl that she was a young lady, and gave them pennies to buy bubblegum. He always told their mother how much they had grown.

Myrna bumped into the family several times during the German Chocolate Cake months, and she cooed over and tickled the children before they left, when she would withdraw with her pint of ice cream into her inevitable trashy novel.

One night, the only night of the week that George and Irene closed up, George tried to draw Irene into his fantasies about Myrna. (Wouldn't it be wonderful if they had a child like that?) He asked Irene what she thought of the skinny little dancer who always ordered a pint of German Chocolate Cake ice cream.

"What skinny little dancer?" Irene, who now had only a hint of a foreign accent, said. "I don't know who you're talking about." She pressed the covers onto several bins of ice cream, rinsed the scoops, took a rag from the cabinet under the sink, and began to wipe off the glass ice cream cases.

"Oh," she said, "do you mean the black-haired one that came in today? The one you always jump to serve?"

Ignoring Irene's last comment, George said, "Yes, that's her. Don't you think she's kind of charming?"

"What do you want from that poor girl?" Irene asked. "George, you're much too sentimental."

"I suppose so," he said, and as he went back to cleaning the hot fudge dispenser, he asked the next question that popped into his head.

"Heard from Lucy lately?" he said.

"You see the mail—wouldn't you know if I'd gotten a card?" she countered. "The children must be about five and seven—Joey's birthday is coming up. I've invited Lucy to bring them whenever she wants."

"Oh," George said. "Good. It would be nice to see her." He rinsed out his rag and hung it over the stainless steel faucet, put on his jacket and walked to the door.

Irene glanced about the store, checking for crumbs, puddles, and dirt. She opened the door and said, "But I don't think your little dancer is very charming. She seems unhappy—a little sullen." George sighed and locked the door behind them.

When Myrna next came to the store, George looked at her for signs of unhappiness. He had little experience with teenage girls: he had only known his own closely. Lucy had not been happy at that age, and George still shuddered recalling the anger she had managed to provoke in him.

He had almost hit her once, when she was fourteen and had come back from summer camp. Irene had met her at the bus station, and when Lucy came home, she had answered George's questions as minimally as possible.

"Did you like camp?" he had asked.

"Yes," she'd replied.

"How was the food there?" he'd said.

"Bad," she'd answered.

"What'd you do?" he'd said.

"Different things."

He had finally said, "Lucy, you should answer my questions better."

"I did answer your stupid questions," she had said.

"Lucy, that's no way to speak to your father!"

"Oh, I'm sorry," she'd sneered. "And how was I speaking that you so disliked?"

George had started to shout, "Goddam it, you'll tell me about camp or else!" but, realizing the uselessness of his demand, he had stopped and raised his hand.

"Go ahead, hit me," Lucy had taunted. George had let his hand drop.

"German Chocolate Cake in a pint, please," Myrna said, book under arm, jazz shoes on her feet.

George packed it and handed it to her.

"Thank you very much," she said, counting out exact change and smiling at him.

Myrna was much more polite than Lucy had been. George was relieved to discover that although Irene had thought that Myrna was sullen, she was merely quiet.

The months passed and George and Irene still hadn't received a letter from Lucy, but Myrna came into the store almost every day, smiling shyly and asking for German Chocolate Cake ice cream. Irene began to worry about Lucy's silence, but George stayed indifferent. Lucy had never written thank-you notes or been very polite, and George was used to being ignored by her. And he could now look forward each day to seeing Myrna curled in a chair with a book and a pint of ice cream.

In June, Baskin-Robbins stopped offering German Chocolate Cake, and Myrna, as was her custom, stopped coming. George felt that the store was very quiet and that he was very noisy. He kept dropping things, quarts of ice cream and metal scoops, and then would curse inwardly. He shouted to himself, but he was sure everyone could hear him, the opposite of the way it had once been, when he would ask Lucy a question and she would ignore his voice.

"You've been in a terrible mood, George, for the past few weeks," Irene finally said after he growled darkly at a dropped case of plastic spoons. "Is anything wrong?"

"Yes, George exploded. "Why haven't we heard from Lucy? So damn inconsiderate."

"George," Irene, pragmatic as usual, said, "if it's bothering you so much, why don't we call her?"

Yes, Lucy was fine. She and the children would love to come visit. How about September? September it was, then, and she was sure the kids would be excited when she told them.

The summertime was hot, and the store was crowded. George's feet swelled when he stood all day long, and for the first time ever he was annoyed by ice cream stickiness on his fingers. His bald spot seemed to be growing. He was tired after standing all day, and he told Irene that he was feeling his age. He disliked the summer clientele—they were too rushed and noisy and he felt invaded. George looked forward to September—business would slow down, and while he was a little nervous about seeing Lucy, he was anxious to see her children. And the flavor lists that arrived in late August showed that September was a German Chocolate Cake month.

But September brought neither Lucy nor Myrna. Lucy called, saying everything was too hectic; they'd have to make it some other time. Myrna just never showed up. Every time the bells on the door tinkled, he looked up, expecting her, but she never came. He wondered if she were on a diet but decided that idea was ridiculous. He'd probably made her uncomfortable—she'd probably noticed his stares, perhaps going home to her petite young mother and saying, "Mom, that old man in Baskin-Robbins is always looking at me. It's kind of creepy." Her mother would have worried and would have advised her not to go to the store anymore.

Irene noticed George was depressed and told him not to worry—Lucy would come visit some other time. He said he didn't care if Lucy came or not.

It was a bad year for George. Even when the heat was gone, the swelling in his feet was not. The young matron with the toddlers (not toddlers anymore—they walked confidently on their own) told him one day that they were moving, that they would miss him. He gave her children free strawberry ice cream cones. The store seemed to be filled, more than ever, by fleshy bankers and their giggling secretaries. When the bins of German Chocolate Cake ice cream arrived in May, George felt nostalgia but no real hope. May passed and George had nothing to occupy his mind except his swollen feet. He remembered that his grandmother had died after getting heat stroke, and he asked one of the kids who helped out to sweep after they closed up, because the morning sun was too hot to be a pleasure. He served the customers tiredly, no longer noticing who liked what or each flavor's number of sales.

He sweated, and because he sweated, he tried to keep his movements at a minimum. He no longer looked up when the door chimes tinkled, and thus when he saw Myrna open the door one day in mid-June, it was only by coincidence. He squinted and moved hesitantly to the counter to serve her.

"Double scoop of German Chocolate Cake in a cake cone, please," she said.

"On a diet?" George asked.

"No, no diet—just broke," she said. "I don't have enough money for a pint." And then she laughed, "Oh, no, I haven't gone without for a whole year! I'm going to school in New York, and there's a B&R right down the street."

"You look as though you like it," George said.

"Oh, yes, I'm very happy," she said.

George packed her a very heavy pint, covered it with whipped cream and nuts, and insisted it was on him.

"Congratulations," he said.

Myrna came in many times during the rest of July and August. She still always carried a book, but had replaced Harold Robbins and Rosemary Rodgers with Nora Ephron and Judith Krantz. She finally told him when she would be leaving for school. He wished her luck, and she said she'd be back next summer.

After Myrna left, George told Irene that "the little dancer" had returned to school in New York.

"Oh," Irene said. "That's too bad."

George sighed and scrubbed the counter. He had put on weight, and even his hands felt heavier and bloated.

"I'm getting old," he said.

"Um-hum," Irene said, stretching to get a new canister of hot fudge from one of the higher cabinets.

George looked about the store. "Those kids don't do a good job of cleaning," he said. "I think I'll begin sweeping in the morning again."

Irene told him that was a silly idea, to at least wait until the swelling in his feet went down. She said he could sweep in the winter and stop when the heat came. So George waited, and in late fall resumed the task, sweeping slowly and tiredly, beginning behind the back counter every morning.

Christina Kelley

Princeton

Dreams
of
dandelions and things

A rubber-coated
playground that
smells of
home

Streams
with lilies
(though there were no lilies there)
and ducks
on
fences

A three-sided diamond
and two balls

A walk that
was a
mile,
now a
yard,
to the banks of more
rivers

Games
for little boys and
big boys too

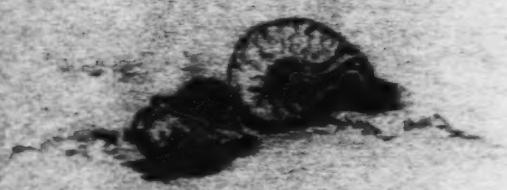
An underwater trolley
brings me back to
Reality.

—the dreamer (dreaming again)

Missed

Standing on the beach at night
Searching for answers.
Looking out across a thousand miles of sea—
Looking for a face I'm not sure is there.
Beyond the horizon in a foreign land,
Someone is standing on the beach
Searching for answers.
Looking out across a thousand miles of sea—
Looking for a face that could have been me.

—Milo d. t. Bailey



Alejandra Abella

L'Essence de la Vie

Water in a glass,
Poured by the hands of a child,
Patience and love, frustration, laughter.

Water in a glass,
Replenished by the hands of a mother,
Understanding and supportive, laughter with tears.

Water in a glass,
Evaporated in the hands of time,
Emptiness and love, understanding and gone.

—Catherine Frazier

Salamander Youth

—Milo d. t. Bailey

Helen Lee

Both our moms worked after school, so we were almost always on our own. We'd walk home from school and go through the regular routine: dump books, change clothes, get a snack and leave. Almost every day without fail, me and my friend Amanda (I remember Mom saying that was improper English) would return to the schoolyard. From there we'd go off on wonderful adventures exploring the creek that bordered the playground. Most of our time was spent picking mulberries (the ones Mom said not to eat) and catching—rather, trying to catch—salamanders. They sure were sneaky little creatures. No matter how hard we tried, they always got away. If I saw one, I'd call Amanda over to look. The minute she'd get there it would be gone. After a while we gave up. I don't know why we even bothered trying. Once we'd caught one, we'd only let it go. Trying gave us a challenge, another adventure to follow. It was just one more thing to do.

There were no limits to the games we played. One day we'd explore the Amazon, the next we'd be on a deserted island—the islands being little dry patches on the bottom of the creek. I never understood why there were dry patches. I guess because it was a man-made creek the cement on the bottom was a little uneven. I remember one day we were on the Nile. Playing the part of Cleopatra, I had on one of my nicest sundresses. Mom would have killed me if she knew. The slime on the bottom of the creek made it difficult to walk. I'll never forget how nice that dress looked before I fell.

Throughout the seasons that creek was our playground. Winter brought the cold and snow, but that never stopped us. We'd don our boots and other snow gear and pioneer the Arctic tundra. The water was fairly shallow, so it didn't take much to freeze it. Sometimes we brought our skates with us. We pretended we were Olympic skaters as we stumbled along on the ice. Though it was often very cold, fear of getting yelled at for not wearing hats kept us outside for hours on end.

When spring came, the melted snows and spring rain made the creek a lot deeper. It was usually warm enough by late March for us to wade in the water barefoot. That was convenient because by that time my boots weren't much good for keeping water out.

The hot days of summer took us to the creek with our bathing suits on. We had so much fun sliding down the artificial waterfall and even more fun trying to go up it. After summer, which was usually too short for my liking, school started up again. For the two years after I had met Amanda in the first grade, that was our lifestyle. Then with the beginning of the third grade came the beginning of serious homework. The days of exploring the creek gave way to learning the times table and bothering boys. But by then we knew every inch of that creek anyways.

Looking for Answers

I'm looking for answers again though I'm not quite sure of the questions.
It's 10:13 and someone is putting nails in a wall.
One room is well lit in an unoccupied house for sale.
I tripped over a dead squirrel earlier, while walking the dog.
There seem to be a lot of them about.
The dog romps through the leaves so carefully raked into the gutter.
The familiar sound of the front door opening.
The lifting of the latch and the squeaking of the hinges.
The dog waits patiently to have his leash removed.
My eyes fail to focus when I don't want them to.
The sound of the dog climbing the stairs.
Click, click, click, scratch, click, click, etc.
His nails are far too long.
Mother's in her room packing Father's clothes for his trip.
The hum of the radio is increasingly annoying.
Then it stops and you miss it.
Like having the hiccups.
The branches in front of the street light appear circular like a spider's web.
The perfect round ones.
Circle inside a circle inside a circle and so on.
Strange how in 17 years of life it would take me till now to see them.
Maybe it's just something I've forgotten.
A seemingly insignificant observation not worth holding onto.
Like clinging to the side of the pool, so as not to drown.
Like clinging to my bike, so as not to fall off.
Like clinging to the memories—
Submerged in what was only
a lonely night in December.

—Milo d. t. Bailey

The Routine

He arrived at home spent
Kissed his wife
Popped two aspirin
Mixed a drink
Fell into his recliner
Flipped on the television
And realized
at last
with dismay
That his wife didn't have any answers
Pills don't cure tedium
Gin doesn't taste like salvation
The upholstery was worn
And so was he
See you later, Irene, I'm junking the television
This picture is depressing me

—Laurie Goldberg

Escape

If I flew out of my window
While the radio played a top forty song
for the 31st time,
And my calculus rested unopened and undone
on the floor,
While the digital clock clicked the minutes
into hours,
As the radiator hissed and spluttered,
Would the rose by my bed notice?
Or would he grow in the pulse of my room
And cry only when I didn't come back for him?

—Jenny Burris

Phillip Klein

Looselatch Flats in the Case of the Scarlet Bow

—Robert Julia

Well, that about does it, I never thought I'd leave old 666 Cooke Street. Ah me, the memories we've shared. I guess I'd better be off before I go and get sentimental. Hmmn, what's that over there in the corner? Some scrap of paper the cleaning-lady missed? No, no, it's not trash, it's a . . . well, I'll be, it's a red bow! Now how did that get there? Let's see, that's where I kept my files on all my cases. Oh, right, that's my memento from The Case of the Scarlet Bow. Now I remember—that was the one in the old castle down by the Drynkenwyff Moors. Yeah, yeah, I had been working here for about two years when she walked in. . . .

It was an especially foggy night for August in Southampton, and I was about to retire for the evening with my pipe when I heard a sudden, frantic knocking on the front door. I could tell by the sound of the knocks that my guest was a lady and at least five feet, three inches tall. I undid the latch, and in jumped an attractive, and damp, lady, whom I judged to be about twenty-four years of age. She was in a near hysteria, and her long, flowing gown swished about in every direction. After she had calmed down a bit, she told me her name was Irene, Irene Adler. I welcomed her in, offered her a seat, and poured us each a cup of tea. She apologized profusely for her shocking entrance and began to relate to me why she had come here.

"Okay," she sighed, "I suppose I should start from the beginning."

"That would be most helpful," I assured her.

"Well, you see, it's like this," she said. "I was waiting up, about seven o'clock it was, for my boyfriend, Sir Laurence of Monte Crisco, to show up at our front gate where he . . ."

"Would your place of residence happen to be in the Drynkenwyff area?"

"Why, yes, it's right alongside them, but how did you . . ."

"Ah, and have you been writing letters to someone, probably this Crisco fellow, from an interior room of the house by candlelight?"

"Why, yes, but how could you possibly . . ."

"Ah, and were you writing one of these letters while you were waiting for your gentleman caller, and were you not drinking some hot chocolate and getting drowsy while waiting?"

"Well, no, not exactly, you see, I was . . ."

"Ah, and were you . . . what! Not drinking chocolate and falling asleep! Impossible! I tell you, you must have! I'm sorry, I'm relaxed now. I think I had better start from the beginning. I noticed a bit of very dark green mud on the sole of your shoe that could only have come from the Drynkenwyff area. I deduced that you were without proper light, because you were squinting, and your fingers were cramped in such a way that you must have been writing. As for the last assumption, I perceived a tiny brown spot on your cheek, indicating that you had tiredly splashed a little chocolate on yourself."

"You are correct, except that I just have this drinking problem and seem to keep sloshing drinks on my face. Anyway, to get to the heart of the matter, Laurence was late, so I strolled outside, hoping to see him coming, when I saw his crumpled form at the base of a great oak. I screamed, and our butler, Yeates Ivanitch, came outside and pronounced him dead. I went crazy and, remembering you, the great Looselatch Flats, came here as fast as I could. You see, I suspect foul play. This night he was going to propose to me, but my stepfather, Damien Carraducci, didn't want me to get married. I wish to enlist your aid in finding the guilty party."

"Gladly," I said. "But for tonight, you will go back home, and I will see you at precisely eight o'clock. Oh yes, one last detail. Could you tell me who else lives at your castle?"

"Sure," she replied, "besides me and my stepfather, there's Yeates Ivanitch, the butler; he's from Lower Rumania and has a lot of trouble with our language. Then there's Millie the maid, and crazy Uncle Harry, but he's locked up in the dungeon beneath the castle. I think Yeates is in love with me, but I could never love him."

"And why not?" I queried.

"Well, he's a low-class person, he has no intelligence, and he's fifty years old. Millie is a deaf-mute, but we keep her on becuase she's been with us for so long. She can converse with hand signals. Nobody else lives there."

"All right then, I'll see you tomorrow at eight o'clock."

I hardly slept a wink that night. I sifted through the sketchy details I had, thought about seeing once again the enchanting Irene, and so forth till I awoke with a start at seven.

I quickly got ready for my morning engagement, and at eight o'clock on the dot, I knocked on the great door of Castle Drynkenwyff. Instead of the lovely Irene whom I expected, a man with a heavyset frame and a cowering glance responded in a distinctly Rumanian accent, "Who ist?" to which I replied, "A caller for Lady Irene."

"Laidy Irene ist exspectink known, so you vill leaf dese promises intimately!" he snarled.

Before things got really hairy, Irene called from behind the brute, "It's okay, Yeates, I was expecting Mr. Flats. Please show him in."

As I entered the castle, I happened to notice some movement along the wall. As I got closer, I realized it was just light reflecting off a suit of armor. But it did seem to move. . . .

As Irene led me to the living room, Yeates lumbered off—probably to inform Damien Carraducci of my arrival. Sure enough, as soon as Irene and I sat down, a shadow fell over our forms, and I got my first eyeful of Damien. He was six foot four and full of muscles. His deepset eyes glared into mine, and he said in a very, very low voice, "Whatsa matta you? Whatcha think you-a doin' in-a my castle?"

"Mr. Carraducci, I presume? I am here at the request of Miss Adler to unravel the mystery concerning the murder of Sir Laurence of Monte Crisco."

"Yes-a, yes-a, I-a see . . . you-a have no business here, because Crisco a-died-a of-a heart attacka."

"Well, I am here to be the judge of that."

"Very well then, if-a you so hotsy totsy boutsy murder, then you can-a stay."

"Thank you very much for your cordiality, Mr. Carraducci."

Irene then led me through the house towards the back door, which is near the path, to where Crisco had died, when suddenly, to my surprise, we heard a crash, a monstrous crash. I whirled towards Irene and saw her acting as if nothing had happened.

"What was that?" I shouted.

"Oh, I'm sorry, that's just Uncle Harry," she explained.

The rest of the walk was uneventful. When we arrived at the scene of the murder, I was unable to find any clues. Any possible indications of foul play had been wiped away by horses' hooves. After an hour of searching, I told of my befuddlement to Irene. We returned to the castle. As I entered the mansion, a gauntleted hand wielding a mace swung at me. Fortunately for me, all that happened was the splintering of my pipe. Irene shrieked, and Yeates and Damien came running in from opposite directions. Shouts of "What happened?" and "Are you okay?" assailed me from all directions.

"Obviously," I stated, "the arm on this suit of armor was set to smash in my head, but I'm quite fine. It is now extremely obvious that someone wants me to stop from finding out who murdered, yes, murdered, Sir Laurence of Monte Crisco."

They all gasped. In ambled Millie, and I asked Irene to sign to her what I had said. As Irene flapped her arms about, Millie's face contracted in horror.

"Irene, please translate to Millie as I speak. Nobody, under any circumstances, is to leave this castle. Some one of you—Mr. Carraducci, Yeates Ivanitch, Millie, or even your 'Uncle Harry'—someone killed Crisco. I want to know where all of you were when he was killed. You first, Mr. Carraducci."

"Why, I-a was, well, er . . . I was in-a the study, a-reading *The Inferno*."

"Ah-hah. And you, Yeates, what about you?"

"My sir? I vast cling—da! I vast clinging dere horses."

"Ah-hah. And you, Millie?" Irene signed for me.

"I was taking a nap in my room," she signed back.

"Well, well, well, what great alibis you all have. Why don't we break for dinner. Then I can sleep on these facts, and we shall meet again tomorrow morning."

This said, we all sat down for a marvelous repast, followed by a nice red wine—that smelled of almonds!

"Everybody put down your glasses!" I shouted.

I then ran around to all of the glasses, and the same smell permeated my nostrils.

"The murderer is getting nervous," I announced. "He, or she, laced our drinks with cyanide, hoping to do me in for good. I think we should all be careful to lock our doors tonight."

That night, when all were asleep, I stole downstairs to visit "Uncle Harry." As soon as I neared his cell, he awoke. He was old, very old. His shock of white hair was a mess, and he stooped when he walked. When he saw me, he said, "Ahhh, I know who you are and why you are here. Ah-hah, ah-hah, but though it wasn't I who killed Crisco, I know who did!"

"And why should I trust you?" I cautiously questioned.

"Because you have nowhere else to turn."

"Bah, you're just a crazy old coot."

"No, no, I'm not crazy—they are. All of them. And they know I know so they locked me up down here. But unfortunately for them, I know they know I know."

"But how do you know they know you know?"

"Because if they knew I know they know I know, they'd kill me, though if I knew they knew I know they know I know, it would take all three of them, because I used to be a world-champion heavy-weight wrestler!"

"You are an old fool."

"Don't call me a fool! *Mens sana in corpore sano!* I know more than you think! 'Twas beauty killed the beast!"

"You are crazy! I'm leaving."

"No—don't go! Beware Greeks bearing gifts!"

I sneaked back to my room, planning to get at least a little sleep, when I felt a pair of eyes on me, but when I looked, all I saw was an old painting. Hmmn, I must be getting paranoid. When I got back to my room, the words "Get out! Get out!" were written in, in what? Blood? No, red paint. I was about to lie down when I heard an unmistakable hiss—that of an anaconda! This was going to be a looong night! Instead of tangling with the anaconda, I decided to leave the room. The door was locked! No, I'm just getting paranoid again. One hard shove and it opened. And to my horror I saw what had caused it to stick! The dead body of "Uncle Harry"!

"Well, you old fool," I said, "looks like you finally said too much."

"De mortuis nil nisi bonum . . . ," he hoarsely gasped, and then he slumped over. If he wasn't dead before, he was now.

"Well," I thought, "at least that leaves only three people as possible killers."

I slept a very light sleep the rest of the night in the hall. I awoke in the morning to a hand on my neck—the killer's last ditch effort! I grabbed the arm, twisted, yanked, and flipped—Yeates! "Ah-hah!" I exclaimed. "So, because you couldn't have Irene for yourself, you killed Crisco! And now that I am here, you feared I would find you out, and I have!"

He remained motionless. I guess I flipped him pretty hard onto the marble floor! Then his eyes began to focus on me, and he wearily wheezed, "Was ist?"

"Ah-hah!" I re-exclaimed. "So, because you couldn't have Irene for yourself, you killed Crisco! And now, in the presence of such a superior master-detective as myself, Looselatch Flats, you knew for certain that I would find you out in no time, and I have!"

"But, but, but, but, but . . ."

"But nothing! I'm taking you in for murder one and attempted murder. Oh, I knew it was you the moment I saw you!"

"But, but, but, but, but . . ."

"Well, what is it, man? Spit it out—but know, anything you say can and will be used against you!"

"But Mr. Flats, I vast juiced faking you oop."

"A likely story, juiced faking, er, just waking me up. And why should I believe you? Just because I was asleep in the . . . well, yes, it's possible, it's possible. How about I arrest you for assault and battery? No? How about jaywalking? I tell you what, if you don't mention this to anybody, I'll let you off with a citation."

"Da, da, ist goot idea."

"Okay, but remember that you got off easy. Oh, yes, there's a hungry anaconda in my room—why don't you put 'Uncle Harry's' body in with the snake?"

"Da."

"And then fix breakfast, but please, wash your hands first."

I went down to the sitting room and found Mr. Carraducci and Irene having a heated discussion. . . .

". . . don't love me, and I also realize I'll never be able to take the place of your father, but I wish you'd be a little more trusting."

"Hah! I don't love you because everyone knows you hated my father for marrying the woman you loved! Unfortunately, he didn't realize to what extent you'd go to get her for yourself!"

"So, you still think I killed your father and caused your mother to run away? She ran away because of her three stillborn children—it drove her crazy! And . . ."

"Crazy? Like Uncle Harry? He knows you killed my father, and that's why you give him injections of morphine every day!"

"Morphine? It's medicine!"

I decided this would be a good time to enter. "Excuse me, but I couldn't help overhearing you mention 'Uncle Harry.' He is dead." I then proceeded to relate the events of the night before and of this morning. When I finished, both their faces were horror-stricken.

"Well," Irene said after composing herself, "do you have any idea who the killer is?"

"I have many suppositions as to who the killer is, but no hard evidence. I do believe we should all stick together after this, or another may end up like 'Uncle Harry.' "

"How foolish," said Carraducci. "When we sleep, the killer will strike! We should keep the same sleeping arrangements as last night."

"That's where you're wrong!" I exclaimed. "The killer would not risk exposing himself thusly."

"Why don't we forget about this for now," interjected Irene, "and go eat breakfast."

"A marvelous suggestion," we simultaneously vociferated.

Breakfast went uninterrupted. Afterwards, we agreed to go our separate ways for the day, and at night, we would all huddle together in the living room. Irene and I went off to the library to talk.

"Irene," I said, "I have reason to believe your father is the killer."

"That's what I thought when I came into your office

the other night. But please, tell me your reasoning."

"Well, I'm pretty sure it isn't Yeates, because he held up so well under my pressured questioning. It couldn't have been your 'Uncle Harry'—he's dead—and Millie just doesn't seem to have the capability, although she could be hiding something. Anyway, that leaves only your father."

"In that case, what shall we do? We can't simply wait around for him to kill someone, can we?"

"When we are all gathered together tonight, I will only pretend to go to sleep, but in reality, I will be watching his every move."

"Brilliant, simply brilliant," she said admiringly.

"I know, I know. Until then, I bid you adieu. I must make certain arrangements."

"Goodbye," she wistfully whispered.

I then went to the living room to prepare for the evening's activities. All during the day, I saw neither hide nor hair of Damien or Yeates. Yeates's reason for avoiding me was obvious: he was afraid I might arrest him or something. Damien's reasons were equally apparent. He obviously knew I suspected him, and so he was probably planning to be rid of me tonight. After dinner, Damien had Yeates get five single beds from various guest rooms and set them up in the living room. After talking for two and a half hours, we finally decided to pack it in for the night. Millie, Yeates, and Irene dozed off within the half hour, and Damien seemed to go to sleep in another forty-five minutes. I pretended to go to sleep at this time too. God, it's not easy to stay awake when you're tired and all you have to look at is four inert forms. I kept on slowly sinking off to the land of nod. . . .

Something, I'm not sure what, caused me to awaken to find a tarantula creeping up the covers towards my head. Because the tarantula was on the covers and not on me, it was no problem taking care of it. I then looked around. Everybody seemed asleep. I pounced on Damien's bed and yanked off the covers. . . .

"Eeeeeeeek!!!" shrieked Irene through the pillow I shoved over her mouth.

"Sorry, wrong bed." I then leaped on top of Damien's bed and yanked off the covers. . . .

"Vas ist?" confusingly queried Yeates.

"Sorry, wrong bed." I then leaped on top of Damien's bed and yanked off the covers. . . .

". . . . . " said Millie.

"Sorry, wrong bed." I then leaped on top of Damien's bed and yanked off the covers and said, "Sorry, wrong bed," to Damien and jumped off.

He got up and bellowed, "Whatsa matta you, hey, gotta no respect, whatcha tryna do?"

"Whatcha, er, what do you think you're trying to do, putting a tarantula on my bed?"

"Whatsa you talking about, Pizza-face?"

"Oh no you don't. Don't play dumb with me. You know you're the killer, and you knew I knew you were the killer, and so you tried to kill me tonight. Too bad for you I knew you knew I knew you were the killer, so your tarantula ploy failed!"

"Hunnh?" uncomprehendingly responded Carraducci.

"It won't work, Mr. Carraducci. I watched you pretend to fall asleep, and then I foolishly fell asleep myself, only to awaken to find a tarantula crawling up my covers towards my face!"

By now, everyone was up and asking questions, and utter pandemonium would have broken out had I not screamed, "Shut up!" at the top of my lungs. I explained the situation to everybody except Millie, whose arms were such a blur that even Irene was having a hard time translating.

Now Mr. Carraducci stood up to his full height of six-four and started to talk. "So-a Mr. Flats, every-a-time you find a tarantula a-crawling up-a you bed you a-blame-a me?"

"No, Mr. Carraducci, only when I find a tarantula crawling up my bed and I am sleeping in a place where you could put it on my bed and you know I suspect you of being the murderer!"

"You-a think I a-killed Crisco? Well, maybe I-a can't a-prove I-a didn't kill Crisco, but I-a certainly can-a prove I didn't putta the tarantula on-a you bed."

"Go ahead and try it," I said, rather amusedly. "Dig your own grave."

"Thank-a you so much for-a you permission. . . ."

"God, you're all such fools," Irene shouted. "How can you expect to find the killer with the wrong suspects!!!"

"What are you talking about?" we all said in unison, except for Millie, who was standing in front of Irene and wildly waving her arms about.

"I'll tell you what I'm talking about," ranted Irene. "I am the killer!!!"

"These events have just upset you," I said pacifyingly. "You just need a nap."

"You are all so incompetent," Irene hysterically shouted, while grabbing Millie around the neck and pulling a knife out of the voluminous folds of her nightgown, "especially you, Looselatch! Why, if you and I were the last ones left alive, you still wouldn't suspect me! Even after I told you I was the killer, you just thought I was tired! To think I went to all the trouble of luring you here, because I thought you might have found me out! Hah!!!"

Then Millie started talking with her hands. I'm not sure what she was saying, but it was probably, "What the . . . is going on here?" But just as she was finishing waving her arms, she knocked the knife out of Irene's hands. I immediately jumped for Irene, but she was already headed for the door. Damien wasn't too slow either, and he ran to block the door. Irene spun about and headed for the stairs. I ran to intercept her, but she was faster than I had calculated, and all I got was a handful of hair and a red bow.

"You'll never get me," she screeched.

She ran into my room, and I, remembering the anaconda, yelled, "The snake!"—but it was too late; she was in.

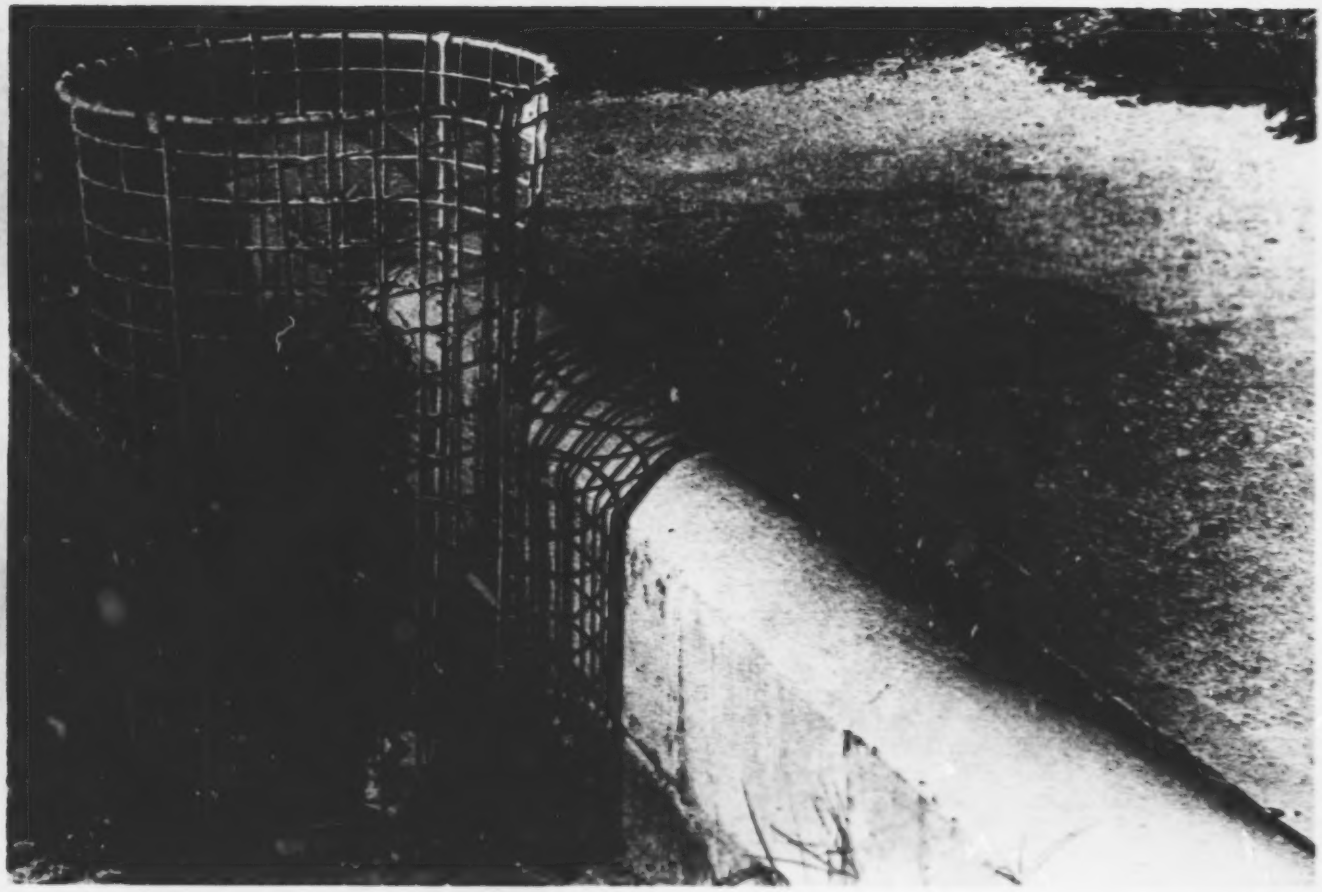
"Whair ist Irene?" bellowed Yeates, who was running up the stairs with Damien right behind him.

"She locked herself in my room, with the anaconda!" I replied. "We must break the door down!" I shouted. "On the count of three. One . . . two . . . three!" but the door didn't budge.

"Ha-ha-ha-haaa-ha," Irene demoniacally laughed, "you'll never get me-eeeeeeeek!!! No, no, Herman, don't eat me, I'm your master! I'll bring you some delicio . . ."

We all worked with one mind—break the door down! In eight minutes, we had it down, but it was too late! The snake had eaten Irene in one bite and lay gorged and contented on the floor.

. . . Ah, yes, those were the good old days, when butlers really knew how to hit the floor, and women really knew how to be swallowed by anacondas. Oh well, I guess I'd better go on home now. Hmmn, I won't be needing this bow anymore. Ahhh, there's a trashcan.



Aaron Wilson

Plaster & Wire

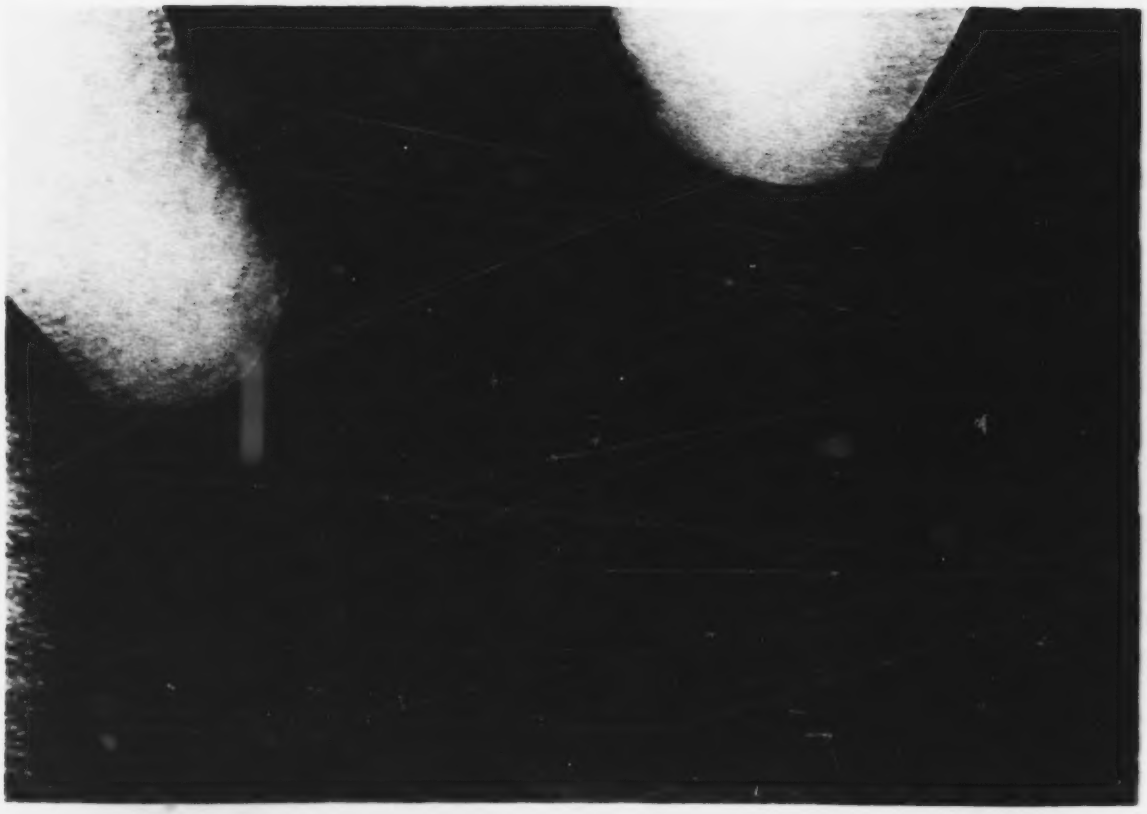
Thinking that all is right
The feeling is superficial
No, the feeling is not
The being is.
The feeling is an actuality.
Blood and flesh is the feeling.
Plaster and wire is the reality:
When the truth is known.

—Kate Samworth

Social Security Office

black venetian blinds
playing tug of war
with the sunshine,
hanging on bullet-proof windows—
barriers between
the overheated, carpeted halls
and the wind.
synthetic-wood monster desks crouch,
covered with Bic ball-point pens,
No. 2 pencils,
and ins
but no outs
in the green metallic trays.
behind these desks
sit
people;
65% polyester
35% unknown
made in U.S.A.
with brown-plastic framed
prescription glasses
hanging on painted-silver dimestore chains.
take a pink or orange ticket
from a neon-yellow box marked
TAKE-A-TICKET*
in bold black
and wait your turn
on a cracking, protesting
movie-house chair.

—Emily Kaufman



Julie Shannon

Mr. U.S.A.

—Arthur Burris

Dave Campo is amazing (he's incredible, he's $5.99, and he's all the time). He comes into your living room wearing a Morton's jacket and a super wide tie (soon to be the latest fashion craze) and gets right to work. He doesn't start off with "Fellow Americans" or anything as trite as "Ladies and gentlemen"; he begins with "Friends." First, he tells you the model of the car—"1983 Oldsmobile Cutlass Ciera"—and then, "Oh. Look at this price. Just eighty-nine hundred [pause] and eighty-eight dollars." Next, he goes over to a fluorescently painted sign that even Ed Mullaney couldn't match, and he reads, "Ya wanna finance. Ya bring me forty-nine dollars down, ya drive it home, hundred forty-nine dollars a month." And then, in a voice much less menacing than Uncle Sam's, "I want you [pause] to call the hottest number in town: eight-nine-three-eighty-one-hundred." And finally, he strides to a phone from which he snatches the receiver and says, "Let's pick up the phone, let's give us a call, we'll [long pause] see ya here." Note the dramatic pause between *we'll* and *see ya here*, conveniently wedged in to give you a chance to grab a snack: "Let's pick up the phone, let's give us a call, we'll see ya here." Yale Drama School cannot teach you that kind of timing. The guy's a natural.

And people just naturally love him. All over the country, kids are checking the "other" box on career surveys and filling in the blank with "car salesman," while at the same time joining the thousands of Dave Campo fan clubs popping up all over the country. The Walt Whitman chapter has begun its fundraising drive so they can get Super TV, which is running his commercials purely as entertainment. The only reason I watch TV anymore is to see his ads, and I bought my Betamax for the sole purpose of taping them. (And before you ask . . .) Yes, I'll buy my first car from Templeton Oldsmobile.

Yes, Dave Campo is obnoxious, but the fact that he can be obnoxious and still double Templeton's sales in only two months is a great testimony to capitalism. And in this age of artificiality, it's nice to know that Dave Campo doesn't use a script—he ad-libs (kind of like Reagan does with his economic policies). Dave also doesn't promise good service, low prices, or good wrenches; he just tells it like it is. All this makes him the first car salesman in the world to become a national folk hero, and he's given the United States someone to rally around. Let's face it, he's irrepressible, and he's ours—right here in America!

My Best Bowl of Fruit

—Chip Landis

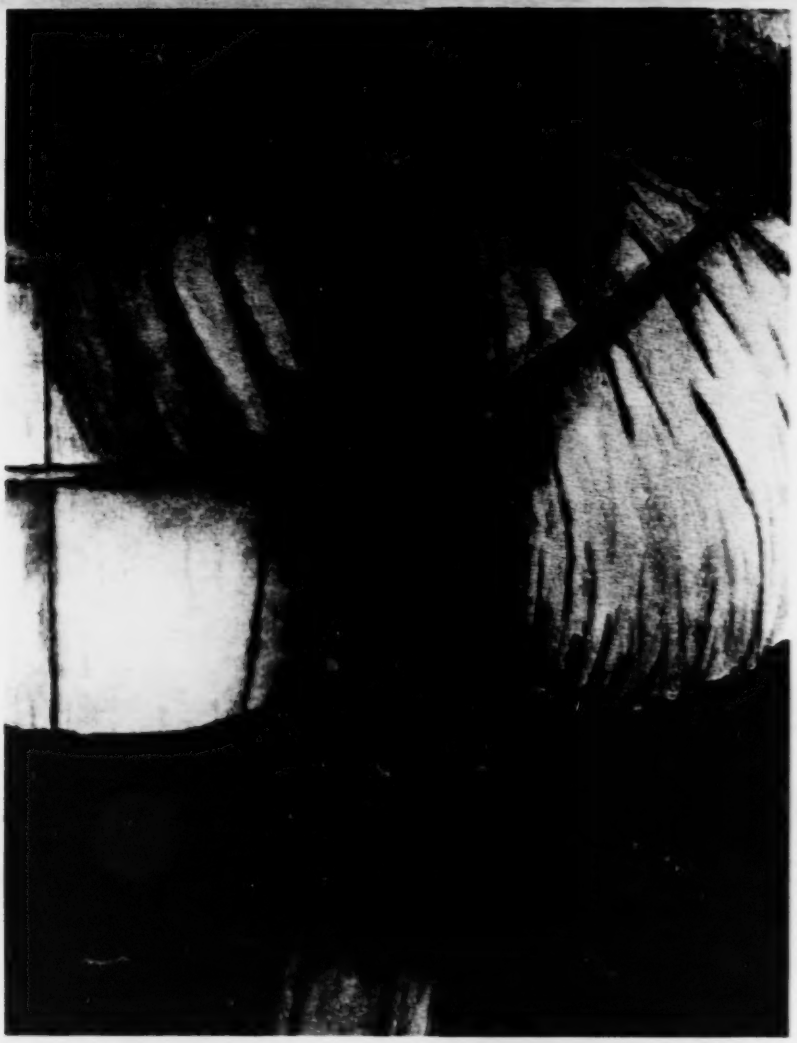
Through his warped perception, the contents of the fruit bowl took on unheard of character and challenge. There were soothing dun to maroon peaches, friendly oranges, charming plums, obnoxious bananas, and cliquish grapes. Each fruit stimulated an emotion. Each emotion stimulated a thought. Each thought was soon then lost in the momentous madness of his musings. One particular fruit, however, managed to lodge itself most precariously in his consciousness. It gleamed dark red and subtle purple, an ominous artifact among lesser rubble. The thought, "blood," surfaced intensely and then faded . . .

Momentarily the fruit seemed like some bizarre creature's tooth—perhaps that of some ancient and long-removed species—perhaps some baleful minion's of Satan—certainly once possessed by some fantastic being of our distant imagination. Its huge, lumpy trunk tapered down into four pudgy, affected and useless legs. Between the four legs there still remained a hideous circular growth—its several shades of lighter darkness contrasted sharply with the various reds of its ancient dwelling. One remaining root slumped out of a slight crater above the trunk.

Momentarily, our subject seethed from thought into action. . . . The fruit's surface was unexpectedly resilient. . . . A question mark superimposed against a misty glittering of multicolored sky radiated in some recess of his mind, enveloping his consciousness. . . .

And in motions slow,
this image twinkled and then faded,
as questions (a tooth? my hand? me?) drifted,
  unanswered.
Then, as the misty glittering pervaded,
and our subject's actions narrowed to instinctive,
the confusion of the vision was sated,
and the road to bliss discovered. . . .

The lumpy red resilience was quelled by a powerful wall of ivory incisors as instinct gave way to the delicious. The evil possibilities of red were forgotten as our subject plunged into the cloud-covered purity of the fruit's inner self. His taste buds heaved as the twinkling acidity of the apple's savory juice placated his perennial need. Throughout his essence, there was a brief reign of bliss as the bubbling rivers of the fruit's true self surged their way toward final liberation either in pleasing him or in escaping to the outer world. Ultimately, as the apple's soothing rivers found their fate, so too were all his malevolent delusions absolved as reason and imagination gave way to natural state hedonism—the true Brahmin.



Julie Shannon

Talented

Not thrown
but slowly, steadily pressured
into the dust that quietly gathers in corners.

Occasionally a draft comes
and the dust rises only to fall back
into dark and still corners.

And this has never changed.
The owner has never thoroughly cleaned
its house.
The owner couldn't even air its house
and rid the corners of dust.

Inhabitants live amidst the dust.
They walk on it, sometimes dance on it.
They can be happy with or without it
because they don't notice how the dust
gathers
or how the house has turned into a shack.

—Elizabeth Miller

Aaron Wilson

Rotten Fruit

Dust caked houses
were stacked in piles
like shrunken apples.
Worm-holed windows
framed muddy faces,
bruised blue with hunger,
shaded black with oily tears.
On the dirt walls grew weeds
as thick and smelly as green mold.
The air laced itself with hunger,
sweet fermenting hunger,
and lulled the tired to numbness.
A young woman in a torn red dress
sat on a rattling wooden crate
in the shade of a straggly tree,
flapping her hands at sluggish flies
and poking her bare, toughened feet
at the rotting fruit
lying tumbled in the dust.

—Lisa Schoenberg

Contemplation

Sitting on this shifting mass
of earth—so solid
I wonder
how I can be sitting here
not worrying about anything
when there are so many things
to worry about—
and not rejoicing in anything
when there are so many things
to rejoice in.
Just sitting here
thinking about things
and staring
at the stars

—Michelle Parrish

Mike Derzon

Oklahoma Dust

—Alison Foster

Dust clouds rose in the old gravel road as Lenn made his way home. Kicking rocks, he amused himself as any eleven-year-old boy might. On this trek, Lenn was returning from the local store, where he had delivered a small basket of vegetables to the owner's wife. Shoving his hand into his overall pocket, he flipped the coins between his thumb and finger and wondered if Mama would accept them. He also thought how his lazy older brother Joe had gotten out of going by pretending to be sick and then running off to the sink hole with the other boys for a swim.

Rounding the corner, he woke from his daydream, realizing he was almost home. The old wooden shanty about a hundred yards ahead of him had been his home ever since he was born. It had even come with them when they moved on to the acreage from the land near Asher. Mama was on the porch doing the laundry for her large family, while the smaller children and baby Georgy were playing at her feet. Mama looked old and tired, much more aged than her true forty-six years.

She greeted Lenn with a warm, weary smile when she looked up and noticed him approaching.

"How did May like the vegetables I sent her?" Mama asked.

"Oh, all right, I guess. But, well . . . Mama, she. . ."

"She what? Out with it, Lenn," asked Mama, suspiciously.

"Well, she paid me for the vegetables and told me that I wasn't to leave until I accepted the money. I just didn't know what to do," Lenn spurted in a single breath.

"Give me the money," Mama commanded softly and calmly. "I'll put it in a safe place."

With that, she left the children on the porch and went inside the dark wooden shanty to find a place for the money. She didn't blame Lenn for its presence, for he could hardly have said "No" to an important person like May Fisher. The boy had probably thought it would help pay the farm expenses, which it would, but that was beside the point.

On the porch, Lenn lazed a while out of the intense summer heat. Oklahoma was known for these hot, almost sticky days in summer.

It was too hot to work in the fields, but he saw Dad there watering and caring for the young tender shoots of corn and beans. Dad was a funny fellow, often acting somewhere between mean and caring. No one was ever sure of his mood; it was so changeable. Lenn himself had always feared his father, who had probably never in his life had the ambition or the education to do any-

thing else but be a sharecropper. The only thing that gave his father pleasure was drinking and playing the fiddle. The latter he did only when he was drunk or in a very good mood, which wasn't often.

Dad started to walk toward the house nonchalantly, but Lenn couldn't help feeling a shiver go down his back anyway. Dad neared the porch and asked, while staring at the post, "Where's Mama?"

Lenn answered, "She's in the house. I just got back from delivering the vegetables." The last comment was never heard by the old man because he was already inside.

Lenn guessed that he should start to work, for he wasn't getting anything done just sitting there. The barn looked a mess, so he figured that was the best place to begin, pitching hay, mucking stalls, and feeding the horses. The barn had always been his favorite spot, almost like home. He often went there, instead of to Mama, when he felt the need for security, because she usually had too much to do with the smaller children and chores.

Suddenly the barn door swung open with a hefty shove. The brightness of the western sun almost bleached out the looming figure of Dad. As he came closer to Lenn and into the darker depths of the barn, Lenn saw that his father was angry, murderously angry. Dad's eyes glared, and his mouth twitched as he asked, "What did you do to your mama to make her cry?"

"I ain't done nothing to her," Lenn insisted.

"Then why was she crying when I went in to get a drink of water?" he retorted.

"Well," Lenn said as he backed away, "I don't rightly know." But he felt that the true reason was the money.

"I'm going to kill you if you don't tell me." Dad had that queer look in his eye that he always got every time he went hunting.

"I . . . I . . . I don't know, Dad, I really don't. Please don't hurt me."

Dad said nothing, as though he were still toying with the hunt, planning his strategy and moving in.

Lenn plunged forward. If he could run fast enough, he could escape, but Dad was too fast and blocked off his route.

Seized by the waist and held in midair, Lenn panicked and started to blurt out whatever he could. He screamed, "Let me go, you old mad-man. Mama was crying because she didn't want you to find the money 'cause she knew you'd go get drunk. Mama works herself to death every day, and all you do is go get drunk. You old good-for-nothing, you can't even get a decent job!"

When Lenn's outburst had petered out, he knew he had hit a truth about his father—one that Dad would rather not be reminded of. Dad's eyes drew closer together, and his lips were so firmly pressed that they turned white.

Dad was so furious that he shook the boy violently. Lenn screamed with terror as Dad clenched his grip on the boy tighter. Lenn was unable to move his body or arms; only his legs could dangle helplessly, unable to cause harm to his attacker.

Mama had been roused from the house by the alarm coming from the barn. Sensing danger, she grabbed the nearest weapon, a length of stove wood. Finding the situation in the barn desperate, she tried to free Lenn; then she hit her husband over the head with the stove length. Dad slowly slumped on the hay-covered ground. Lenn was trembling but wouldn't show his ragged emotions to his mother. Lenn crawled behind the corner hay stack, and as his face tightened, he peered out to see Mama stroking Dad's face until he was conscious enough to lumber back to the house with her.

At supper no mention was made of the episode in the barn, and the other children only mildly inquired, "Where's Dad?" or "Why's Dad not at supper?" To these questions, Mama only answered, "Your Dad's in bed. He's got a sore head." Lenn felt guilty for this but didn't know why.

When everyone was asleep that night, Lenn found that he couldn't sleep. He gently left the large bed he shared with his brother Joe to return to the porch. Outside he found Mama sitting on the rocker, in the filtered moonlight, staring at the stars. She noticed that Lenn was standing in the doorway and called him to her.

"Don't blame Dad for what happened today, hon," Mama said. "He was just worried. He has a lot pressuring him now, like the crops and the lack of money."

"He hates me. I know that."

"No, he doesn't. I think you just frighten him a little 'cause you remind him of himself when he was little. He used to be a quiet one, then, but he was pushed too far until he became ornery. Don't worry about that. You're both very different, also."

Lenn was relieved a bit as his face relaxed, and he curled up beside Mama in the large porch rocker. A fresh breeze stirred the yard and sifted the newly raked dust. They both looked bleakly up at the stars as the chair rocked rhythmically.

Dreams

—Tony Acquaviva

Deep purples and oranges filled the sky as the evening sun began to set on the straight and dusty desert road breaching the shallow mountains in the distance. Walking along the dry pavement, toward the unreachable sunset, was Horace Limewinkle.

He looked up and squinted at the distant colors. A warm breeze blew across his face as he gazed before him. A lone tumbleweed rolled silently across the road a few hundred feet in front of him—carried over the sands by the swirling chicanery of a brisk zephyr. "Gee whiz," said Horace in his meek, wimpy voice, "I sure could use a ride." He thought about the three cars that had passed him within the hour. "Gee, I sure wish one of those guys had stopped; I mean, gee whiz, I had my thumb out and everything and they were goin' my way anyway," the boy pondered. It had been twenty-five minutes since the last vehicle had sped past him.

Suddenly, from seemingly out of nowhere, Horace heard the distinct, giant rumbling of eight dangerously over-stressed cylinders of a custom-made, fuel-injected, supercharged, chrome-plated engine roaring out for attention. The boy turned swiftly and saw, three feet away, a triple distillation of evil. There on the road sat a throbbing, pitch-black, 1969 Ford Interceptor with a huge, scorched, black air scoop protruding from the massive hood and long, gleaming, black, fluted exhaust headers that hissed and smoked from hours of exertion.

In the driver's seat, a shadowy figure clad in a tight, cracked, and weathered black jumpsuit and thick, leather gloves sat motionless, his hands clasping the vibrating steering wheel. The stranger wore a shiny black helmet with a large, smoked visor that encompassed his entire face. "Gee, sure is a neat car you got, Mister," Horace said. The phantom-like driver remained silent and seemed detached from the lad, his face pointed toward an unseen truth far down the road. Horace cautiously stepped closer to the hot, rumbling, wicked machine. "You goin' my way?" he asked eagerly. Again, there was no answer. "Yup, neato car. Gee whiz, Mister, who are you?" he asked, bobbing gaily beside the steaming black automobile.

The driver's head then twisted slowly, and from under the muffled shield of the glossy black visor, he uttered in a dry, gritty tone with a voice easily ten times deeper than that of the bass vocalist of the Statler Brothers simply, "Dreams."

" 'Dreams'? Gee whiz, Mister, what's that mean?" said Horace, pondering the plurality of it, not noticing the shadowy figure methodically lifting a sawed-off, 12-gauge shotgun and laying it smoothly across the open window of the car door.

With a mighty blast, the meager youth was blown to pieces in a scarlet shower. Dreams popped the clutch, and the Dream-mobile roared down the road into the sunset's ever-deepening purples and oranges.

48

Rhoda Bouma

Breeze

On a warm sunny day
Wistful flutter-byes and
Joyous caterpillars
wend their way to somewhere
Nowhere.
A cat jumping the corner
of the porch is
looking
for
warmth.
Sunlight streams into
the house where
the inhabitants are too
lazy to move.
Then there is me, Me.
I've seen things no one
will ever see.

Clouds cover the sky
Humidity is oppressive
Nothing in sight
but
a scraggly, mangy
dog
that scurries into the porch of
my house
No one cares.

—Michael Crosby

Christina Biddle

A Momentary Vision

—Alena Binder

They are sad. They show a maturity that has come because of the hardships they have seen. Their depth holds wisdom, but the light shimmering in the almond-shaped lakes reveals the insecurity hidden within. Their hard glance shows that they are scared, but they will not let anything touch them. Not after what they've been through. They are the eyes of a child. Not an ordinary child, however; a child who is nameless, who stares at me from a magazine page. I know nothing about this child—its past, its future—yet it touches me so deeply as its eyes look into mine. It looks as though it may cry, but it will never let me share its sadness. This child is so beautiful to me. Its eyes are like dark pools of water, which hide nothing but rather tell all. These eyes give the child its beauty. They show life in its sad, scrawny little face, like a beautiful lily in a murky pond.

I know not even if it is a boy or a girl. It doesn't seem to matter. Never again will this child look the way it does in this picture. I will never see it as anything else but what it was at that moment. To me it will always be a beautiful child, whose eyes capture my heart.

Sara's World

A child
perched on the edge
of an old chapped dock.
Her chubby feet dangle
into the lucid film
creating some sort of disturbance,
an investigation maybe,
not an intrusion.
Silvery fleeting minnows
dart in and out like spinning disks
furtively snatching at the fleshy toes
that seem to hang innocuously
like pieces of gold fruit.
The child flexes, buoyantly
at the smooth tractile lips
that almost close around her toes.
She looks down into the glassy image.
An endearing face—flocked with auburn hair
peers up at her.
She smiles at it
and leans back
letting the Sun's resonant face
warm her ivory belly.
The Wind's cooling emollients caress her skin,
lithe and resilient.
She smiles back at the Sun's ruddy face.
This is her world.

—Christina Biddle

51

The Carousel

—Jenny Toth

It was both terrifying and exciting the way it grew so large as the little girl ran towards it. The music carried through the park, and it, too, grew louder, until she heard little of anything else. She stood fascinated before the magnificent, sinister carousel.

The fall day was clear. Leaves spread upon the ground in a somber array. She shuffled through them. The crisp sound delighted her.

"Please stop that. I can't hear your mother," her grandmother said. Boring, boring, uncolorful grown-ups. She walked behind them, never looking anywhere but at the fallen leaves.

She wanted to be a leaf. She wanted to feel the soft rain. She wanted to flutter in the breeze with only a branch to hold her. She wanted to feel a storm, the trembling of the tree and the lighting of the world. Most of all she wanted to touch the sky and play in the wind. In the fall she would change into brilliant colors. Then she would fall, drifting, floating, sailing in the exciting sea of breezes. But what would happen when she reached the ground? She would lie very still, roasting in the sun until the cool, white snow would float down to her as a falling cloud. Leaves never died; they were only hidden after their fall.

Her brothers were horsing around. Occasionally they would search for the most beautiful leaves, expose them to the grown-ups, and forgetfully drop them. She gathered the leaves to ease their rejection.

The girl picked up her own leaf of fading scarlet and held it closely, feeling some kind of camaraderie. She talked to it as though it had lost its way.

"Who are you talking to, Fiona? Your little friend?" She smiled, confused to be brought back to the real world. "What's your little friend's name?" She smiled, finding it easiest to let the grown-ups stay in their naive world of reality.

She had another world—a world where inanimate objects felt all the emotions of life. She felt as much for a doll as for a lost pen. While other children played "Kissin' Kooties," she sat in a tree wondering what the birds were saying and what the blood-red worm was thinking as he squirmed through the grass. How strange the world would look if she were tinier than the grass. Perhaps the ground is a world in itself with grass as its trees and people as its enemies.

"Is she always this quiet?" one of her teachers asked another nearer by to the girl than they thought, in the playground.

"She's a strange one," the other answered. The girl listened quietly and smiled. She knew the handicaps reality creates for grown-ups. She looked up at the people in the park, hoping she would never be like them.

As she and her brothers ran towards a pile of leaves, they heard the alluring music. "Can we go on the carousel, Dad? Please? Please?"

The carousel was as brilliant as the scarlet leaf she held, yet it had a different kind of beauty. It stood magnificently, outshining the world around it.

She chose her horse as they stood in line. He was brown with wild eyes. His head strained to the sky as an angry attempt to free himself from the binding bit. His body was preparing for a terrific revolt.

Three bells sounded, and the carousel awakened. As the carousel gained speed, its magic began. The girl closed her eyes, reassured by the warmth of the horse as he pranced on soft air.

Tossing his head, he sent waves down his mane. They flew higher and higher until they danced upon billowing white clouds. They were above it all; only the birds and sharp stars were able to see them. The soft clouds shielded them from the dull and curious world.

Suddenly, with majestic grace, he lunged far above the clouds and on to the jeweled sky. He came alive then. The waves flowing down his back became more turbulent, and his tail slashed out at the wind. He raced upon a path through the black darkness of space lit by the piercing stars to nowhere. He raged with fire, lashing out at the darkness. To the beat of his clamoring hooves, to the little girl who clung to his fiery mane, he whispered, "We're almost there; don't open your eyes. You don't want to see. Never open your eyes."

There was a great tremble, and the girl looked up towards the sky. But there was a roof, not a sky. She watched as the pole connecting her and the horse to the ground broke away from its restraints. Her brothers gasped as the girl and her horse leaped away from the carousel. Not having the power to reach the open sky, the girl and her horse flew crashing to the ground.

She heard people gathering and an ambulance's siren screaming. "What happened?" someone asked. "Hang on, kid," someone said. But it was all so confusing.

Above the spinning world, she heard the horse whispering, "Close your eyes," and she let go and drifted quietly away.

A gust of wind blew, and a scarlet leaf drifted to the ground. Nobody saw it fall, but some noticed it on the ground.

Sculpture by Alejandra Abella/Photographed by Mike Derzon

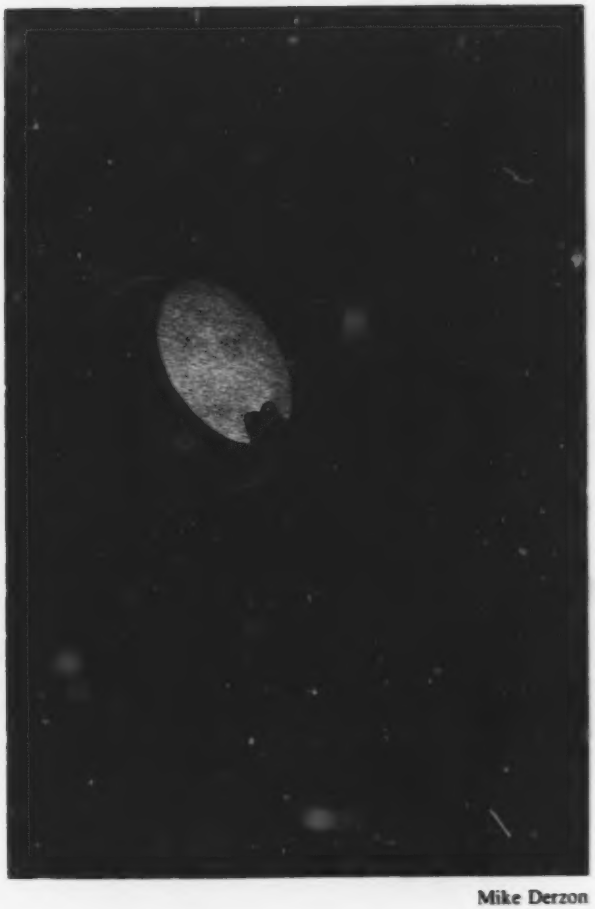
Reality 2

—Paté Mahoney

Water is all around me. Behind me, far behind me there is nothing, and my breath is taken away by its beauty. It is the end of the world. I can see it, and I'm going towards it. I want to be there, in the center of the universe! I try so hard to get there—I move my legs as fast as they can possibly go. I am exhausted. When I look around me, I notice I have barely moved ten feet. My back is sore. There are voices, far behind me, but I don't want to hear them, so I don't. I just want to get to the end of the world.

I want to go back, back to land, back to safety. There is something out there that frightens me. It's big and black, with a long, long tail and a huge face that comes out of the water to snarl at me. It has teeth, sharp teeth, and long claws that will snatch me from my open seat. This monster waits for me at the end of the world. It doesn't want to wait anymore, so it comes to look for me. I am unsafe, and I want to be on land again. The voices call once more—this time I want to hear them, so I do. They are angry, and I am getting upset. I'm pedalling my fastest to get to land, but the water is getting rough. The monster wants me to stay in the water; it does not want me to leave. My legs are so sore, and the rain is beginning to fall. I'm still running from the monster, but I don't look back because I know he's there. Land, safety, I'm finally there.

But what have I come to? Safety, pain, and humiliation. Voices I don't want to hear, but they force me to listen. Faces, strange faces of a foreign land digging deep inside my eyes for answers, faces I don't want to see, but they force me to watch. Then the monster calls for me; he wants me back. I am lost now, because both places, land and sea, call for me. Yet when I answer their calls, they laugh at me. In confusion, I begin to see things as they really are. No monster, but beauty. No safety, but humiliation. I want to return to the sea, but I'm taken to the car to go "home."



Mike Derzon

Reflection

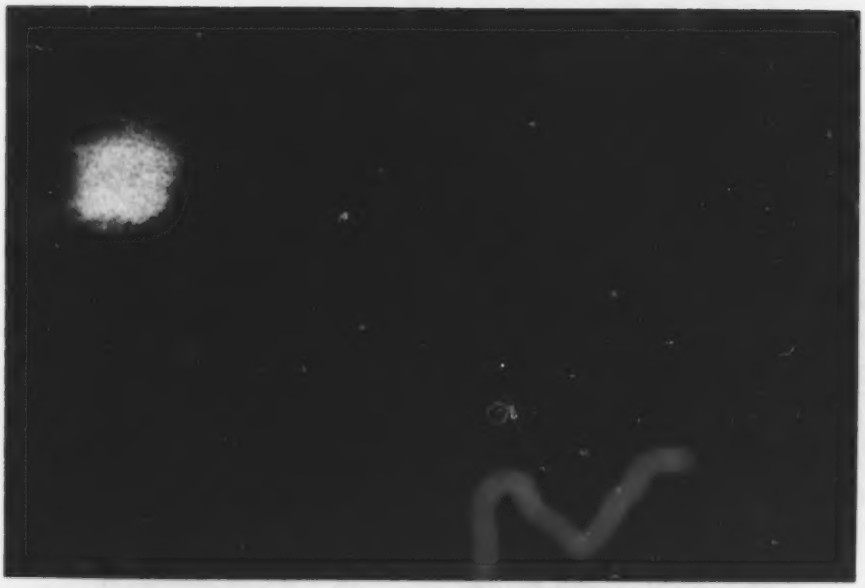
On a woodsplintery pier that extended
ninety-six exceptional miles
into a murkyspeckled lake, distended
a soft stream of sunlight—your smile.

We dangled our feet into dusty waters
as the sun spilled onto our backs

A lonely canoe faded
into the phreatic mud beside us
And your foot, faintly sanded
Splashed our sparkly endlessness

And set liquid diamonds sailing
into the redsilverness of the late afternoon.

—Eva Pollin



Anonymous

Skies

Upwards I stare,
Into the night.
The darkness surrounds me,
Shrouds me with fog.
A star shines bright in the night;
I wish on it.
Continuing to scan the skies,
I see more stars as they appear.
One after the other, they light up the night.
The moon peeks out at me from behind a cloud.
It's dark no more.
Now I'm surrounded by light,
Enveloped in the beauty of the world.

—Irene Hantman

Rhoda Bouma

Debbie

—Ruth Polk

The back stoop is warm from the afternoon sun, and now, as the light begins to ebb away, I stretch my legs out to catch its last touch. We're both sitting with our backs leaning against the house, facing the garden. The bubble jar, half full of a rosy liquid, sits between us alongside the book of poetry. At this moment she has the wand, and with a smooth, oh, so gently steady stream of air, blows to form the perfect bubble. Gradually it enlarges, stretching to hold the air and reflect the scenery on its glittery surface. Now it's caught on the breeze, and silently we wonder about its prospective journey. Will it travel to the garden fence, and from there out into the real world, or will it join the hundreds of other bubbles, landing on petal or leaf, and rest there sparkling in the sunlight?

Somehow these afternoons of blowing bubbles always put me in a nostalgic, romantic frame of mind perfectly suited to poetry reading. Often, the wand passing between us pauses, as we find a favorite poem that must be shared.

But now the bubbles no longer sit on her shelf. She took them with her when she went to college. Sometimes I walk into her old room and sit on her bed, just thinking about past times and the shared remembrance of afternoons and blowing bubbles.

Rae's

as a child
you pictured the castle
doors
in *Jack and the Beanstalk*
as great,
        wooden things
and you took those doors away
from the fairytale
and put them on
your own house
they are the only things
in your castle
which block
the sunshine
because the walls
are glass
and the floors
are bare
because the carpets
haven't arrived
yet
so the house looks empty
but you fill it
with laughter
and turn up your parents'
45 watt amplifier
and sing
and laugh
everything away
except the sunshine
pouring through
the walls.

—Emily Kaufman

57

to my friends

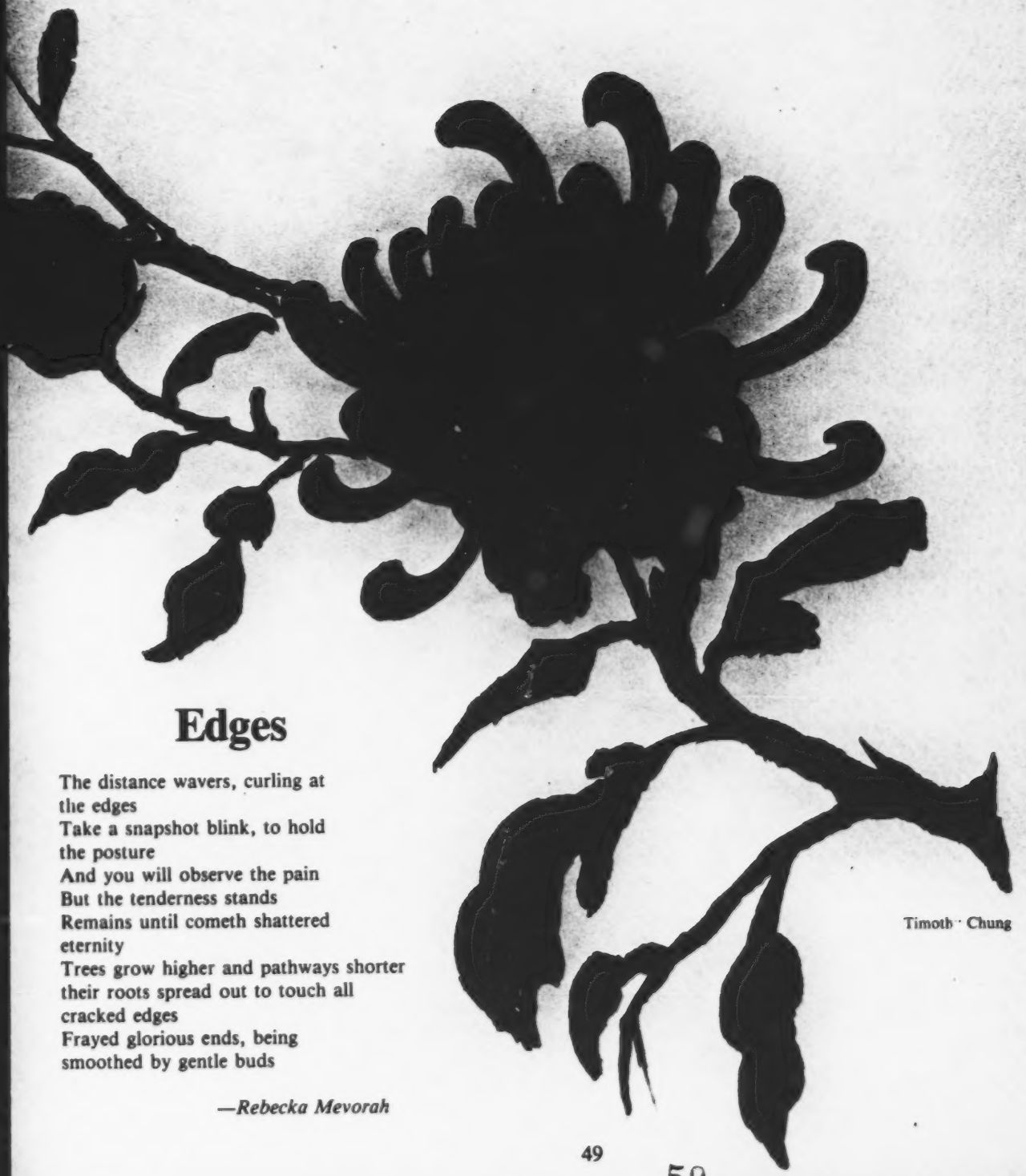
[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

—Lisa Schoenberg



Edges

The distance wavers, curling at
the edges
Take a snapshot blink, to hold
the posture
And you will observe the pain
But the tenderness stands
Remains until cometh shattered
eternity
Trees grow higher and pathways shorter
their roots spread out to touch all
cracked edges
Frayed glorious ends, being
smoothed by gentle buds

—Rebecka Mevorah

Timoth · Chung

Mike Derzon

Pond Ripples

—Miriam Klevan

Anne was young, but very tiny lines were beginning to form on her face. Every night before she went to bed Anne contorted her expression to exaggerate these lines and then traced them with her fingers. When, she wondered, had her face involuntarily assumed these expressions? She had not believed herself capable of emotions violent enough to sculpt her face, but perhaps she had underestimated the power of her own artistry. She had believed herself to be blessed, rightfully exempt from nature's law of aging, but it seemed that she had also underestimated her own mortality.

Every night Anne washed her face, splashing memories onto her skin. She brushed her teeth, absentmindedly cleaning every reachable spot on them. And before she allowed herself to curl up in bed, she combed her hair and made horrible faces in the mirror.

Once in bed Anne tried to pinpoint when age and emotion had seeped through her pores. Ensconcing herself in a quilted cocoon she remembered certain years, years still overflowing with emotion. Unsure about what proportion of herself was young and what was old, she looked for enlightenment in her memories and dreams.

When Anne was born, she had refused to cry. Not because she couldn't; the frustrated doctor had grimly described her as "ornery." Anne knew from family lore that as a child she had been proud and selfish, and unusually adept at getting her own way. In fact, family friends and relatives had always commented on her willfulness and charm.

"Yes," her mother would say, grinning proudly. "Anne is going to be quite a heartbreaker some day. She seems as soft and feminine as can be, but is she ever stubborn!"

Anne lived up to the image her mother had created for her. Once, when she was in ninth grade, a boy in the senior class had a crush on her. Anne spoke to him sweetly over the phone, letting her laugh rush and ripple over the wires, lapping gently at his ego. But when he asked her to the prom, she turned him down, drawing her laughter around herself and allowing only an occasional soft splash to reach him. She was, after all, just a child, jettying herself carefully against the world, protecting herself with rigid tastes. She disliked loose ends, lanky boys, and awkward silences. She enjoyed gossip, nice clothes, and the rich, relaxed laziness of summertime.

It was summer when Joseph and Anne met, a long, sweaty summer—sweaty with the kind of sweat that makes a girl's face flushed and pretty—sweat that beads above her upper lip. Summer had come to save Anne from the boys she had dropped and the girls she had snubbed, and it was a relief to shut out the roar of responsibility.

It was a new kind of summer for her, because Anne was dipping her toes in what she termed "intensity" for the first time. The people she had surrounded herself with were so much like rays of light sliding down a deep, dark pool—always fighting to keep from being obscured. Sometimes she laughed at them, but she was secretly reassured that they did not find her superficial, happy that around them she did not feel superficial.

Joseph attracted her most of all in this group. There were many parties where she watched him as one would a film, any unrelated response temporarily reduced to the automatic action of hand going to popcorn going to mouth.

And he watched her, but more slyly; Joseph was not one to lose control. He tried to play her wonderful conception of him as completely as he could, making his muscles flex bigger, his eyes smile wider, his laugh bellow louder. He picked her up and threw her into the water, an instinctive and universally recognized courting ritual among those their age. If he could have made his hair grow blacker, he would have done so. Joseph was good at acting, experienced at it. Thus, the pair's actions toward each other took on the sliding rhythm of ancient choreography.

And all summer long Anne felt as though she were watching a movie—a long, slow-moving movie with no plot, shown at obscure film retrospectives for a dollar—the kind of movie which bores you at the beginning but is hard to leave at the end, because suddenly it has become your life. A foreign language film where the flutter of an eyelash or the toss of a head is much more important than the words being spoken—that was the way that first summer was. Or that was the nights, while the days, Anne thought wryly, were more like commercials. Commercials in which the vigorous, handsome teenagers run a marathon in their Nikes; or the zany, handsome teenagers paint the house with Duralex; or the sexy, handsome teenagers jump onto the beach and pull out the Pepsi or A&W or Michelob. The days were very hot and bright, but there were many more nights than days.

And Anne still remembered the summer as eight close friends with eight strong bodies, even though Joseph's memories, she knew, were different. He remembered only seven strong bodies. But Anne could not paste this knowledge over old feelings: for her that summer would always be eight people by a lake, skinny dipping in the moonlight.

The lake—a deep, dark, sultry center for her life. During the day its brightly dark waters were almost too warm to be refreshing. At night its cool, damp smell clung to the bodies which played in its depths. It was by the lake, on a humid night in August after the others had left, that Joseph told her of his disease, his other, hospital life. He was unsure whether he was ending his roleplaying or just giving it new dimensions. It was by the lake that they first kissed, and she would always associate the feel of his lips with the lake's muddy taste.

After Joe's death, Anne would cry by the lake, letting the mud slime onto her body and into her hair and under her fingernails.

Anne had never been in a hospital room before and blinked several times at the attacking white glare. The fluorescent lights did not resemble the sunny glow of her Pepsi commercial. They pinpointed her, shrunk her, made her joints seem large and fast moving, with each small action magnified and awkward.

Joseph was sprawled wearily in his white tangled nest, bored by what was not to him new. Chatting with the nurse, he seemed afraid to speak to Anne, but she saw her photo taped to the wall. Joseph's arm, which had so gracefully cut the lake's surface, now had tubes of blood running into it, and Anne couldn't help imagining it stroking through the water with all its machinery attached. The movie had changed, and it was not the one she had come to see. Her visit was short.

At home she put on a bathing suit and went to the lake, attacking the cold water furiously. The autumn temperature shocked her body and made her decision for her. Her hospital visits were frequent, and slowly, they became longer.

It was Anne who, having lost her fear of hospitals, suggested that she visit the Radiology Department, not Joseph. Because he spent so much time there, she wanted to see it, for she believed she was in love and wanted to share everything with him whom she loved. Joseph teased her about that.

"If you want to understand what it's really like in Radiology, Anne," he said on the ride up, "you'll have to wear one of those designer hospital gowns and ride like a king on a wheelchair. And maybe lose a few pounds, too." Then he laughed loudly. Anne laughed, too, but more timidly: she had not yet grown used to the black comedy he indulged in.

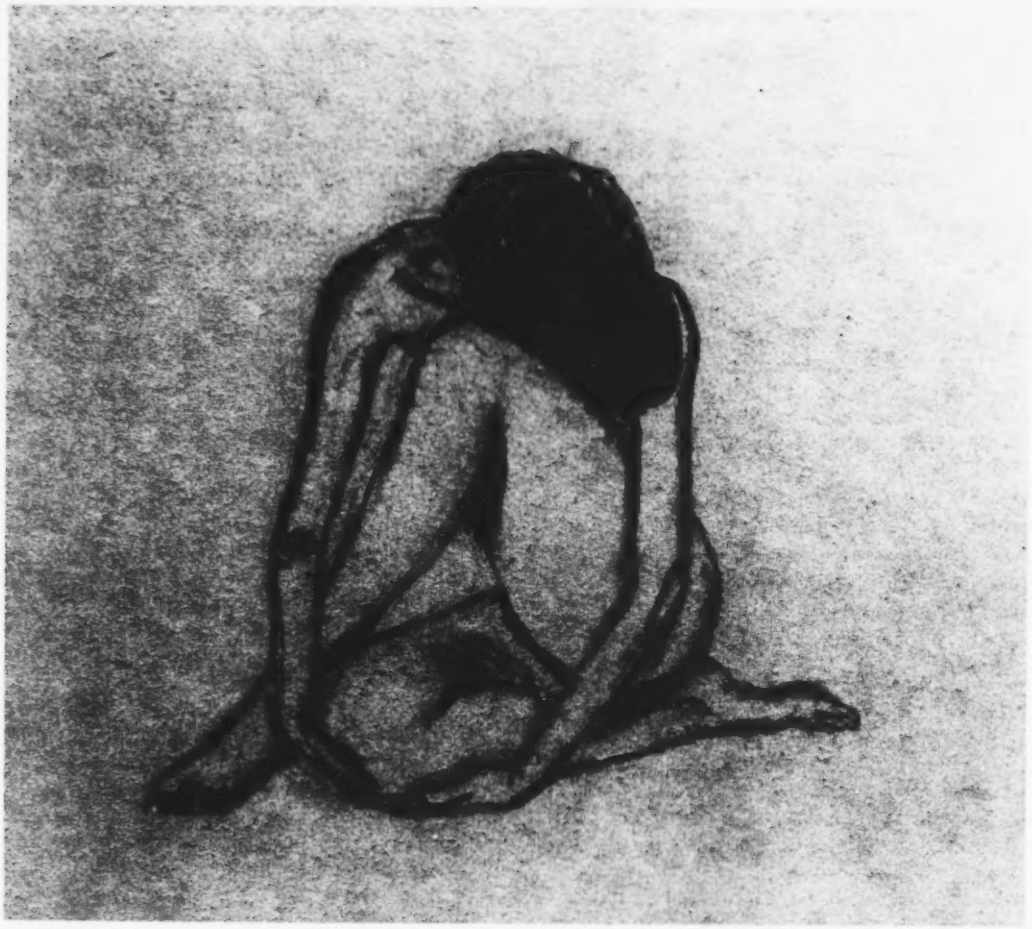
Anne went to the Radiology Department only once, on a milky December day. Too many of the children there were bald, and everywhere elbows seemed about to break through papery skin. Anne felt ashamed: ashamed that she was neither sick like these children not tired like their parents. She was ashamed of her lithe, elastic body, ashamed that there was no way to hide the good fortune of her youth.

When Joe left her, she sat in the waiting room trying to befriend a one-eyed toddler. It seemed to her he could not truly be a child, lacking as he did the sunny glow of children. She smiled at his mother and glanced covertly at the wall clock rather than push up her sleeve and look at her watch. Then the toddler left, also: he was whisked away into a dimly lit X-ray room, and Anne was alone and undistracted. She glanced around the room and tried to still her tapping feet; she chewed her cuticles and flipped through magazines; she tangled and untangled her hair with her fingers; and Joseph returned.

The light was reflected just a little too brightly in his eyes, revealing their watery film.

"What's the matter?" she shot out, and he opened his mouth, and then closed it before any sounds could pour out. He left the room without answering, and, not wanting to make a scene, she followed him: out the door, through the lobby, and into the parking lot. By the time he got into the car, he was crying, flooding his face, beating rhythmically on the steering wheel in pain.

"What's wrong, honey?" Anne repeated, relieved to be out of the waiting room. She stroked his hair, his back, her nervous hands touching as much of him as



Christina Biddle

she could. "I love you."

"You love me!" he screamed. "So what! What the hell does that matter?"

They stared at each other for a few silent moments, and then he put his head against his chest, staring at his hands, turning them and pulling at their small hairs. "I'm sorry. It's just—We went into that room together, and we were so strong and healthy, and now they say they're going to admit me. And—so that's where I belong. I'm just one of those grey hospital kids again." (And then a torturous thought flashed across his mind—had he added that bit of poetry to dramatize the role further, to expand his character more fully? Anne was not as real as a cold X-ray machine. He was not as real as his own pain.)

"But you're not one of those grey hospital kids, Joseph," Anne said, believing it fervently, frustrated that her "I love you" did not make everything better. "If you don't remind me, I completely forget that you're sick. You're so strong, so alive, so much more alive than healthy people I know."

She wrapped her arms around his torso, wanting to believe that her words had healed him, enjoying the whimsical thought that her energy was being magically transmitted to his cells.

Joseph sullenly took the key from his pocket and turned on the ignition. Her charm hadn't worked, and Anne locked her hands in her lap. She needed to be absolved of her strength. She wished she could swim in the lake.

Joseph's anger was pressing on his face like an ocean held back by canal locks. He tried to contain it, yet—

"I felt like I was on display when I went to synagogue with my dad this morning," he said. "At least thirty people asked me how I felt, Anne, and offered their sympathy. I just felt like ripping them apart. I felt like strangling them. I mean, shit—who needs their god-dammed sympathy? Goddammed condescension!"

The guilty rage pressed outward to every seam and corner of his body, an aged dyke against a stormy river. Anne suggested that people just wanted to express their concern about him, and then it was she whom he wanted to strangle, to tear. He clenched his big hands into fists.

"Of course, you don't know, do you?" he asked her. "The feeling of being pitied? The helpless childishness of being something other than a long-legged blonde?"

He was about to go on, but he suddenly realized that he was like a child, that all very sick people are like children, because they are allowed to say what those who have their health are not. Anne had known this for a long time, and so did not wonder why she was taking his abuse, did not try to make a joke of his

anger, did not feel uncomfortable or out of place.

"I think," she said carefully, "I think people pity you out of fear. I'm afraid that what's happened to you could happen to me, and if I condescend, it's to prove to myself that it won't. Do you know what I mean, Joseph? It's impossible to understand the scope of someone else's suffering, and people pity you because they don't understand what you're going through. Somehow they think it's worse than it is without understanding how terrible it is. I don't understand the way you've suffered. But your illness has made me suffer, too, and you'll never understand what I've felt."

She was surprised at the calm with which she delivered such an emotional lecture.

"Anne," Joseph said. "I only yell at you because I want to yell at my disease."

"I know."

Joe was finally out of the hospital, and he and Anne were celebrating. They had drunk champagne with dinner, and now they walked along the side of the lake.

"Let's go swimming," Joe said suddenly, throwing off his coat.

"Joseph, it's freezing out," Anne protested.

"It's April, Anne, let's swim!" he said loudly, untying his shoes. He ignored the trickle of thought which was saying, "Boy, I must still be anemic—I got so drunk. Did they do a blood test before I left the hospital? That idiot intern probably ordered the wrong thing. I should've asked—"

"Joseph!" Anne said harshly, knowing that he did not want to hear what she had to say. "The doctors told you to avoid colds and infections or you'd be right back in the hospital. Don't be crazy, Joseph. Honey, please." She did not say what she was thinking, which was: "Don't be crazy, Joseph, it hurts me so much, because when I see you hooked up to those strange machines, I realize I cannot give you life, and I know I am old, I am old, and I am vulnerable."

"I've been trapped in a hospital for a month now," Joseph said exactly what he was thinking, "and I would really like to live a little."

Anne undressed and dove into the icy water.

She drove the route to the hospital automatically, lost in thought. Remembering their midnight swim, she thought wryly that they must have looked like the perfect, eternal advertisement for the almighty young.

"Looked like," of course, was the key. Anne was part of the hospital now, a member of the club, and the initiation rites had destroyed her concept of invincible youth.

Anne stood naked in front of her full-length mirror, striking poses which accentuated her breasts, her hips, her smile. She pulled her lips to the top of her gums and bared her teeth, pushing on each to see if any were loose. She lowered her head until the lines under her eyes became prominent, then raised it till the lines disappeared. She pinched her leg and watched the skin turn white, then red, then golden tan again. She raised her arms over her head, watching her stomach flatten and her breasts elongate, and abruptly turned away. Her narcissism incomplete, she closed the closet door on the mirror and put on her clothing.

Now when Anne went to visit Joseph, he often said nothing, and she sat sweatily twisting her skirt ends and staring at the bruises on the skin which sheeted his bones. She, like Joseph, did not speak.

At home Anne wandered around, picking up objects and putting them down, blinking in the sun and shivering in the shadows. She carried a sweatshirt to stop the chills, which came on her with each breeze. She stopped swimming because even the hot July sun could not warm a body wet with memories.

One day Joseph said to her, "I'm dying, Anne." She was angry and felt the old desire to run from him. But instead she answered, "I know." Then she did run, not allowing the silence to break into tears.

After this the silences were longer, and sometimes he would say that he loved her.

"I know," she would say, instead of, "I love you," and she would be afraid.

And then she sat in her room with the shades down, and because she shivered she wrapped a quilt around herself. She knew, because everyone told her, that she should go outside and busy herself. But the sun made her blink, and its sweaty breeze was colder than her dark room, and she told herself that love was really just one long goodbye. Although she believed that this was true, when the call came telling her that Joseph was dead, she could not believe that he had gone without her there.

She went to the lake and cried, and let the mud slime onto her body and into her hair and under her fingernails.

And she slid into sleep like mud, the continuous, comforting mud and her ageless, comforting sleep.

The Candle

A small room, totally bare
Varnished wooden floors, white walls
One window with white daylight shining in.

A door appears on the far wall
Red, red light shines in briefly as a tall man steps through
He turns and placing his hands on the sill he looks out.

After the man leaves night falls
The room changes from dim to dusk to darkness.

The man returns with a white candle casting
Flickering shadows about the walls and ceiling
He places it on the floor and leaves again.

The room is still and cool
The candle burns never melting
Yet day never returns.

—Brooks Peck

Christina Kelley

Tendrils

I write to you
  from among the ferns,
    the pine needles,
      the crisp, dead leaves,
and somewhere near
a cricket calls
  a warning out to me.

my heart
is gentle, yet complex;
  fresh and alive
  like the fern;
intertwining emotions
    throughout my soul
  as the fern extends
      its roots
throughout the earth.
but my emotions
    flourish
      and
        grow at a rate
    beyond comparison
      to the fern's
subtle maturity.

and I am accepted
      into your heart,
        into her heart,
          into their hearts,
as the autumn leaves
    are accepted by the earth.

and I exist,
with my emotions
bursting the seams
  of my soul,
in the hearts of those
    who accept my love
      as they accept
        me.

and I
    accept
      them,
        in return.

and the ferns drop their seeds,
and the evergreens flourish,
and the trees grow new leaves
    to replace those they lost.
and friends share tears,
      dreams,
        tomorrows,
and words of meaning
    grow among them
    that no others may understand.

—Emily Kaufman

Phillip Klein

"Aujourd'hui, Michele est morte." (after Camus's *L'Etranger)*

"She died this evening,"
Dad related, almost absentmindedly,
for the benefit of Mom and Aunt Betty,
Each hugging her black puppy
By the door.

A pause—
"It was not unexpected,"
Mom quickly briefed her sister
on the event.

"She was hit
by a school bus on her way to school
Yesterday morning and was in
Critical condition at Suburban
With a severe skullfracture and
a broken leg."

Disbelieving,
I stared at Mom—
How could she be so cool?

Eyes watering,
I sat down to EFAG.
Arcsines jumped across
a blurry page.
In the next room
Hill Street Blues' sounds of
sirens and shooting.
The theme song winds up
Mom's weekly hour of "entertainment."

"She's dead,"
Ringing in my ears,
Asking me why. Death
only happens to old people
and on T.V.
Cats die,
their bodies never found;
Death is simply
sudden absence.

I thought of praying
before, when Mom told me
About the accident,
But I didn't. I thought
Surely she won't
die.
I had great faith in
today's doctors, but
there wasn't much hope she'd survive
without brain damage.

Michele Wilson is dead
Age 15, leaving behind her
A 10-year-old sister and
Two devastated parents.

She had many friends.
I feel like I knew her.
After all, it could have been
Me
In front of the school bus.

—Claire Manwell

Little "Miss Havisham's" Dress

The pink dress
glimmers in my
mind,
as its cloth
is slowly ripped
off my skin.

The baby pink
satin and lace
dress which
was my perfect
childhood
tainted with a
taboo and a
divorce.

I cling to its
lace
as if to familiar
pain afraid
to part from
what I do know
into the more
frightful unknown.

I scream as
its
lace is all
torn from
my collar . . .
I am launched
like a dreidel
into
the harsh adult
world . . .

My childhood is
gone;
my childhood was
gone as it ate
up my flowery youth
with bitter tears
and constant pain
I, unlike Miss Havisham,
have outgrown my
dying dress because
I shall refuse to die . . .

—Jacky Arrowsmith

They Live

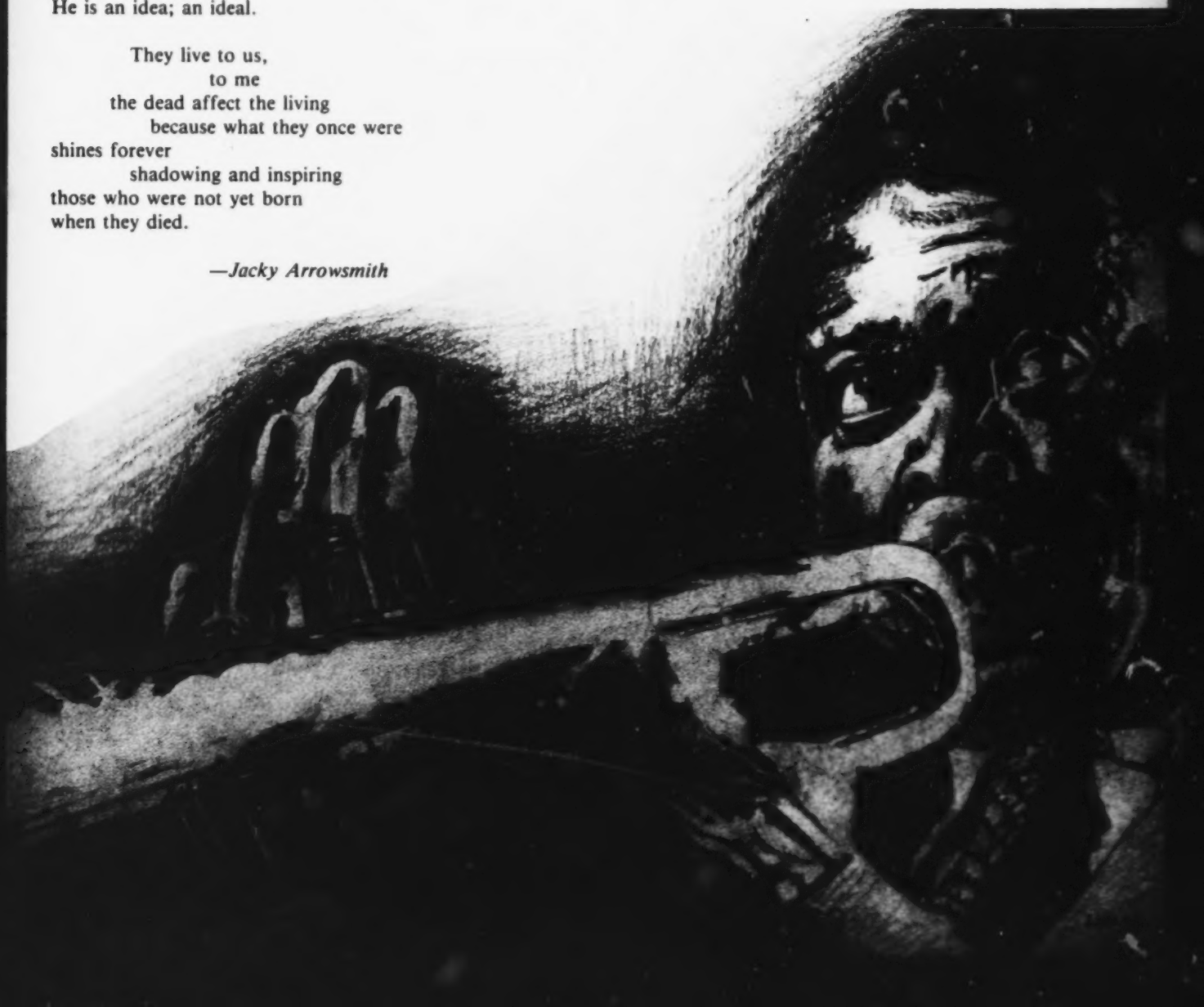
They live
the dead heroes
of years long gone
still live.
To us, the young of today
they live; almost as if
they were really alive
It is not them we strive to be.

I adore marilyn yet
I do not wish to be her
to live as her
and even less to die as she did
I adore who she wanted to be

dean is more than a poster of
a pretty face
more than
a crushed life
or even a tragedy
He is an idea; an ideal.

They live to us,
to me
the dead affect the living
because what they once were
shines forever
shadowing and inspiring
those who were not yet born
when they died.

—Jacky Arrowsmith



Fitzgerald: Revisited

In a pink sequin dress
he first perceived her,
a beauty, lost in between
fantasy and modern times . . .
Her hair was bobbed, her cigarette
holder: long and silver; she
was thin with misty blue lakes
for eyes, she was the queen
of translucent beauty . . . not
emptiness . . .

I saw her there at a flapper
party; I fell in love with
her while tipsy on champagne
and capricious cajoling, the
sort in which young men usually
partake . . .

I stared, trying to grasp at
least a petal of this purity
from afar . . . we were all
lost within the twentieth century . .
somewhere where dreams meet
and reality is disillusion . . .

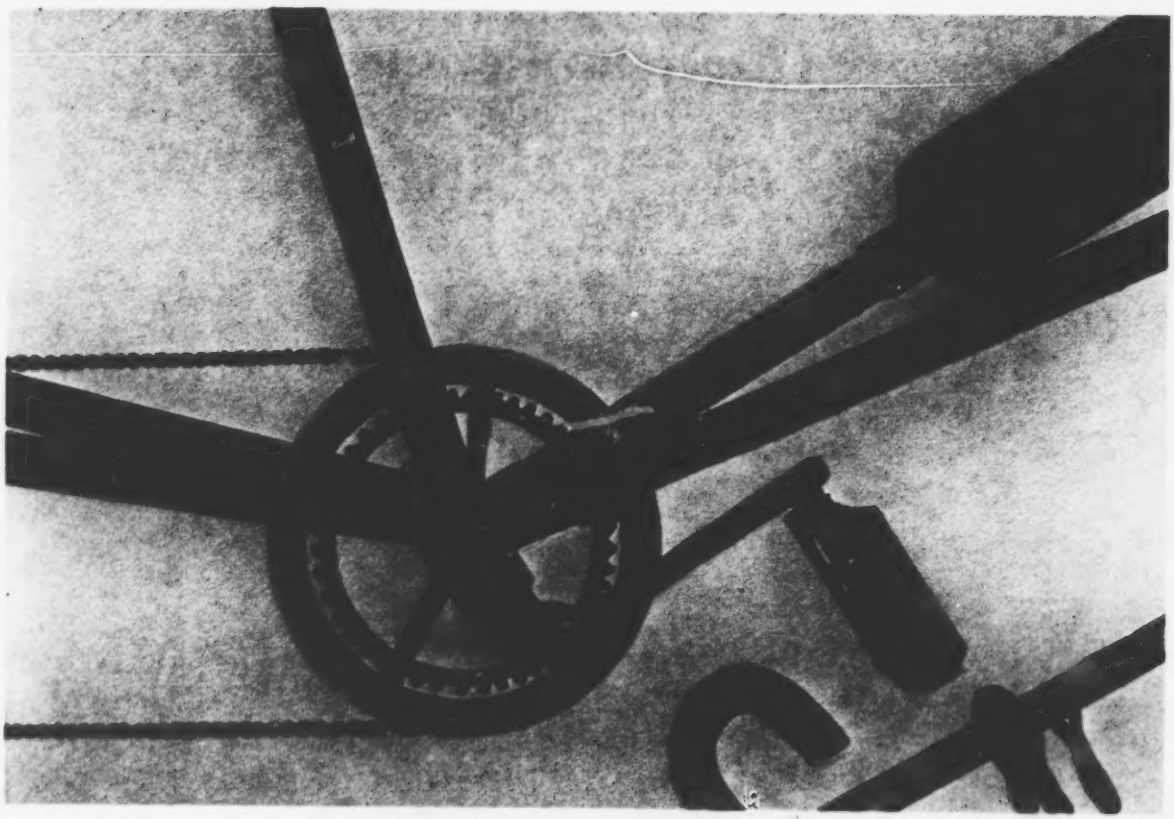
We drank and danced, we even
laughed . . . but she was from
a distant land, the Jazz Age—
long gone . . . ! I was baffled
by this anachronism to our
decade . . . she was a little
late for her age . . .

And then she vanished, as mysteriously
as she had existed . . . into a cloud
of smoke, illicit affairs and sequin
bubbles . . . champagne . . .

Yesterday, I found her again, my
fairy dream . . . she was alive and in
my arms . . . she was not a muse, but
the carefree life full of meaning I
sought . . . and one day I will find her
in my bed and we will be lost in
irreality, together in a "purple haze"
somewhere where no one can reach us . . .
And it will be like an Opium den . . . only
we will be high on each other and
our Dream.

pink sequins . . . bubbles . . .
champagne and wings immortality . . .

—Jacky Arrowsmith



Julie Shannon

Equilibrium

First Performed at B-CC High School on May 25, 1984

—Thomas Mallan

ACT ONE

Scene One

A completely white stage: backdrop, furniture, props, everything white. At center a large white desk with a white telephone sitting on it, at which sits a man in a totally white three-piece suit, white shoes, gloves, face, and hair, and mirror sunglasses.

(Enter stage left an **OLD MAN** in a sterile gown, wandering somewhat lost-sheeply. Seeing man in white **[NIX]**, he walks over.)

OLD MAN: Excuse me, but exactly where am I?

NIX: Why, nowhere.

O.M.: I beg your pardon. I don't quite understand.

NIX: It's very simple, really. You see, when you die . . . er, you *are* dead, aren't you?

O.M.: I'm *clinically* dead.

NIX: Well, I suppose that'll have to do . . . Er, as I was saying, when you die, you come directly here, where you . . .

O.M.: *(interrupting)* Yes—exactly where are we?

NIX: Why, I told you! Nowhere! We are in a complete state of nullicity! Totally void of all existence! Away from it all! When you die, you come here and answer a few questions to help us decide where to put you for all eternity.

O.M.: Shoot.

NIX: Full name?

O.M.: Nelson Cuthbert Aloysius Forgelsnort.

NIX: *(laughs loudly until seeing that the man is serious and then quickly and embarrassedly subdues it)* Place and cause of death?

O.M.: Hospital bed, natural causes.

NIX: Religion or deepest belief?

O.M.: Melon worship.

NIX: *(laughing to himself as he picks up the phone) (to* **OLD MAN)** It's ringing. *(into phone)* Hello? Yes, this is Nix. Uh . . . is *He* in right now? Well, maybe you can help me. I was wondering if there was a section of eternity for melon worshippers? Great! What? Oh, gee, that's a shame. Hey, that's an idea! Okay, thanks, I'll ask him and call you back. *(hangs up)* Well, Nelson, the Creator wasn't in, but luckily someone was watching His office when I called. They said the limit of three trillion people has been reached in Melon-worshipper heaven, but if you want, we can reincarnate you as a cantaloupe.

O.M.: Oh, that would be great!

NIX: Okay, just fill out these forms and . . . *(school-like bell rings)* Uh, oh. Nelson, I'm sorry, but that bell means they're trying to revive you at the hospital and it's working. I'm afraid you'll have to go back.

O.M.: Darn! Well, all right. I guess I'll be seeing you.

NIX: Yeah, chin up, you can't last long. Oh, by the way, if anyone asks, just say you were floating or saw a guy with a beard or something like everyone else.

O.M.: Okay. Goodbye. Nice meeting you. *(Exits left.)*

NIX: Nice meeting you too! *(to himself) Why do I get all the nuts? (Enter from left a young man totally in grey very hurriedly.)* Name?

MAN: My name is Walter. I died in someone's head of old age; I have no religion, but I believe in reincarnation.

NIX: Oh, you've been here before. *(tiredly getting out some paper)* Okay, tell me your whole story.

WALTER: All right. You see, it all started when I was a human . . .

NIX: *(interrupting)* Wait, this isn't going to be a flashback, is it?

WALTER: No, but it'll take a while. Better make yourself comfortable. Anyway, so there I was a human in 1777, fighting in the American Revolution, and I killed this guy in self-defense. So I came here and told them my story, and they said they'd have to give me a light punishment. So they reincarnated me as bacterial slime in someone's head. Well, it was a pretty uncomfortable experience . . . except for one thing. The person whose head I was staying in seemed kind of nice, judging by the various antibodies of his I went out with. Right now I think he is considering suicide. If I were allowed to be reincarnated as a full-grown human, I think I could help him with his problems.

NIX: That sounds reasonable enough. And this play can use any plotline it can get! Fill out these forms and take them down to wardrobe department. They'll dress you and transport you down to Earth. I got to go on my coffee break.

WALTER: Thanks a lot. By the way, things haven't changed too much, have they?

NIX: *(holding in laughter)* In 200 years? What could change? *(Hands him the forms. Exits.)*

(WALTER *shrugs and continues writing as:)*

BLACKOUT

ACT TWO

Scene One

Washington, D.C. (That's on Earth.) Sign indicating that they're in D.C., possibly Washington Monument in background. (Enter **NIX** *and* **WALTER.)**

NIX: Well, this is it, Wally, ol' Washington, D.C., Earth.

WALTER: You mean this is where Sanders lives? *(looking around)*

NIX: Oh, yeah, I kind of forgot to tell you. I think when you were in that person's head, you kind of, well, heard wrong. See, the name isn't exactly *Sanders.* It's more like *Sandra.*

WALTER: A guy named Sandra?

NIX: Listen, you were a parasital slime inside the head of a *woman!*

WALTER: Please! Bacterial slime! I'm very touchy about that! *(thinking)* A woman, huh? Wow, maybe there'll be a love interest!

NIX: Maybe. Look. Her house is right down this street *(pointing).* 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. You can't miss it. It's a big white house.

BLACKOUT

Scene Two

In front of the White House. Backdrop shows road leading up to the White House which includes black fence. Two Secret Servicemen in dark suits, dark sunglasses, holding guns and clenching their teeth, stand erect by the gate. (Enter **WALTER.** *Approaches* **GUARD 1)**

GUARD 1: Whadya want, punk?

WALTER: Oh, excuse me, sir. I was just wondering about . . .

GUARD 2: *(picking* **WALTER** *up by his collar)* Dat's no excuse for committing a federal crime, wimp!

WALTER: But I haven't committed *any* crime!

GUARD 1: *(grabbing him by collar, from 2nd)* It still ain't no excuse, scum! Don't ya never listen to nothing?

WALTER: Please, sir, I realize that there's a search procedure, but . . .

GUARD 2: *(grabbing him from 1st)* Don't try to get intellectual widdus, punk!

WALTER: But I just wanted to see Sandra!

GUARD 1: Ya mean Sandra *Aston?* Ya might as well go watch a parade!

WALTER: Oh! Is she of some importance?

GUARD 2: *(laughing with* **GUARD 1)** Importance?! She's da President!

QUICK BLACKOUT

Scene Three

A hall in the White House. Door at rear of stage (upstage) legibly reads Oval Office. *Portrait of some obscure person on wall. (Enter a tour group which includes* **WALTER.)**

TOUR GUIDE: *(in nasal voice)* Right this way, folks! Don't step on the roped-off marble. It's just had its daily mink oil polishing.

TOURIST: *(pointing to painting)* Who is this painting of?

T.G.: Why, that's the forty-sixth president of the United States, Egbert Thomas. He's the one who got us out of national debt, unemployment, and nuclear war.

TOURIST: *(pointing to portrait and speaking to another tourist)* Look, Mr. Dubois! Egbert Thomas!

MR. DUBOIS: *(with French accent; waving American flag)* Big Mac! Dallas!

TOURIST: Mr. Dubois don't speak much English.

WALTER: Excuse me, but where is Sandra's office?

T.G.: The Oval Office? That's it right there *(pointing to door upstage).* But no one's allowed inside. Security, you see. That's why the key's hidden in that plant there and you have to knock three times hard and one time softly and give a high-pitched whistle to deactivate the electronic alarm before you can get in.

WALTER: I see. Shall we move on?

T.G.: Yes, I want to show you all the executive moose polisher!

(Crowd moves on, **WALTER** *stays, and carries out process described. Exits.)*

BLACKOUT

Scene Four

In the Oval Office. Same door in back, but reversed, and towards stage right. Center stage and upstage is a large desk, at which **SANDRA ASTON** *sits and works. (Enter* **WALTER** *through door.)*

SANDRA: *(looking up)* Oh! You must be the electrician!

WALTER: Are you the President?

SANDRA: Yes.

WALTER: Well, I'm not *exactly* the electrician.

SANDRA: The plumber? The Oval Bathroom is right in there.

WALTER: I'm *not* a repairman.

SANDRA: Well, what *are* you?

WALTER: I don't think you'd believe me if I told you.

SANDRA: Tell me right now, or I'll call my bodyguard, or the *Marines*!

WALTER: Well, you see, I was a microbe of bacterial slime inside your head until I was . . .

SANDRA: *(picking up phone)* Security? Send the army up here right away!

WALTER: Wait! I want to help you!

SANDRA: Well, there're easier ways to get a job as a residential advisor!

WALTER: B-but aren't you considering suicide?

SANDRA: No! Are you kidding? The first woman President, thirty-five years old, elected unanimously by everyone in the country, single and loved by everyone I meet, no wars, no domestic problems . . . killing yourself's so stupid anyway!

WALTER: But if I'm not here to save you, then what's . . .

(Through door enters **PROFESSOR ASKEW,** *a small, weasely man in a white doctor's coat, an eccentric German scientist stereotype, who appears to have been in an explosion. He holds a test tube.)*

ASKEW: *(interrupting* **WALTER)** I haves done it, Sandra! I haves made zee parfected formula for time travel! Vhen dis formula toches on your skinses, it absorbs into your bloodstreamses, speeds your systems up to lightspeed, und you go into time warp!

SANDRA: Please, Professor Askew, move away from the door. The army will be up soon to take this man away!

WALTER: But Sandra, I . . .

SANDRA: Please have a seat while you're waiting, sir. Now then, Professor, tell me more about this formula. How do you control what time you land in?

ASKEW: Why, by how much you pour on your skinses! You see, the year markings are right here on the test tube. *(listening out through doorway)* Oh, no. Here comes that idiot General Johnson with twelve hundred men. Oh well, I guess I'll be going.

WALTER: No, wait! *(grabbing test tube from* **ASKEW)** I got to escape! I think I'll go to the seventeen-eighties and see who wins the revolution. *(splashes some of formula on his arm)*

ASKEW: *(grabbing test tube back)* Gives me that back! I don't know the side effects! *(In grabbing from* **WALTER,** *accidentally splashes some of the formula on himself and* **SANDRA.)** Oh, woops! Sorry.

WALTER: *(makes an unnatural face, seems to shake it off, then, suddenly, jumps up on desk)* You ain't nothin' but a hound dog! *(jumps down behind desk, and appears to walk down a flight of stairs behind it) (pantomime)*

SANDRA: *(watches him go calmly and then jumps up herself)* Is there such a thing as a second bassoonist? If so, what does he have against an occasional hairpiece? *(jumps down behind desk and appears to go down an escalator in the opposite direction in the same space)*

(PROFESSOR ASKEW *calmly goes to space where they have both disappeared, feels around with his feet, and then suddenly pulls an imaginary lever and falls straight down himself as:)*

BLACKOUT

ACT THREE

Scene One

A classroom in 1781. Colonial-looking students sit at desks writing. Blackboard reads "English." *Benjamin Franklin lectures in front of room.*

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN: Now, where was I? Ah yes, I was telling you about . . . um . . . it's what you do with your mouth . . . um . . .

STUDENT 1: Oral.

B.F.: Um, yes, yes . . . uh, that's it. Um, oral . . . You know, how to talk betterly.

STUDENT 2: Oral expression.

B.F.: Yes . . . You see, you uh . . . got to be a good talker . . . 'Cause if you don't uh . . . *think* before you're gonna . . . well . . . try *talking* about um . . . Well, the um . . . people listening to you, um . . . talking, will be thinking that you're not . . . uh, that you're . . . well . . .

ALL STUDENTS: Inarticulate.

B.F.: Yes, yes . . . Uh . . . yes.

(Enter **WALTER,** *wondrously, stage right.)*

WALTER: *(dazed)* Where am I?

B.F.: The Benjamin Franklin . . . um . . . schoo . . . well . . . uh . . .

STUDENT 1: The Benjamin Franklin School of Assertiveness and Public Speaking.

WALTER: What year is this?

STUDENT 2: *(questioningly)* 1781.

WALTER: Close enough, I suppose.

STUDENT 1: To what?

WALTER: 1777.

STUDENT 1: What?

(Enter **SANDRA** *stage right, followed by* **PROFESSOR ASKEW.)**

SANDRA: *(seeing* **WALTER)** There you are! Where are we?

WALTER: 1781.

SANDRA: 1781? That's when the Revolution was won!

WALTER: Really? Well, maybe we can help.

ASKEW: I gots to work on the antidote.

STUDENT 1: Funny you should say you want to help . . . I'm working part time on guard duty, but I have to run an errand . . . You think you could maybe watch the line for me for a while?

WALTER: Sure, anything to help the war effort.

(Bell rings.)

STUDENT 1: Great! There's the bell. Come on. I'll show you where it is.

(ALL STUDENTS *leave and then:)*

B.F.: Uh . . . class dim . . . uh . . . dism . . . um . . . well . . . bye!

BLACKOUT

Scene Two

The guard post at the line. **WALTER** *sits at desk with a notebook. Enter revolutionary soldier.*

WALTER: Name and position?

MAN: Blanston Frepnezzi Smith. Private.

WALTER: Pass. *(Exit* **MAN.** *Enter* **WOMAN SOLDIER.)**

WOMAN: Robin Plattle, Inst. Corporal.

WALTER: Pass. *(Exit* **WOMAN.** *Enter large man in an elaborate red uniform, followed by several people, preferably in red coats, attempting to sneak.)* Name and position?

MAN: *(in thick, pompous British accent)* Charles Cornwallis. British General . . . Er, I mean, elephant keeper. Er, and a few of his mates.

WALTER: Pass.

(CORNWALLIS *and* **REDCOATS** *quietly sneak by and take their time, but* **WALTER** *doesn't look up. Enter* **SANDRA** *from left.)*

SANDRA: *(looks at notebook and then suddenly grabs it from him)* What?! Charles Cornwallis, elephant keeper! And a few of his mates?

WALTER: Yeah, isn't that funny? I didn't even know there were elephants!

SANDRA: Oh, no! Cornwallis was the British general who surrendered to Washington! You just let him and an entire British platoon behind the lines. It must be a surprise attack. We've got to stop him!

STUDENT 1 (JEAN): *(running in from left)* Stop who?

SANDRA: Cornwallis!

(Enter **PROFESSOR ASKEW,** *running, with test tube.)*

ASKEW: I haves concocted the antidote! We can return to our owns Tventieth century! *(trips into all, spilling formula on everyone)*

ALL: OH, NO!

JEAN: What lousy timing! Now we'll lose the Revolution for sure!

SANDRA: And what's worse, we're going into a future where the United States never existed!

ASKEW: Zounds like its could be very interesting! Uh, oh. Here comes zee side-effects. *(pulls out cigar and suddenly looks a lot like Groucho Marx.* **JEAN** *pulls out blond curly wig and a horn and begins to chase* **SANDRA** *around stage.* **WALTER** *pulls out Chico Marx hat. The four begin going towards each other, attempting to shake each other's hands, and missing, and turning around, and trying again.) (in Groucho Marx voice:)* Gentlemen, how do you do? Come here. Come here. **(JEAN** *continuously honks his horn.)* What are you boys giving me, the runaround? Come over here. Now, what do you want? What do you want? Explain your business.

WALTER: *(in Italian accent)* We send you telegram.

ASKEW: Oh, you're the boys who sent these telegrams.

WALTER: (to **SANDRA)** How are you? That'sa all right, you don't have to answer.

SANDRA: *(in high-class accent:) I say!*

ASKEW: You can stay, but you'll have to take that groundhog out of here. **(JEAN** *honks horn.)* Now what do you want? Explain your business.

WALTER: Well, we want to make a reservash.

ASKEW: Reservash?

WALTER: Yeah, we want a room, but no bath.

ASKEW: Oh, I see, you're just here for the winter. Well, walk this way, and I'll see what we can do for you. *(Inevitably,* **PROFESSOR ASKEW** *walks out in a funny Groucho walk, and the other three watch and then follow in exactly the same manner.* **JEAN** *honks his horn as:)*

BLACKOUT

ACT FOUR

Scene One

1981. Basement of house in would-be Washington, D.C. (All four lie unconscious on floor in their original states.)

WALTER: *(awakening, groggily)* Where are we?

SANDRA: *(in same state)* I think we should be in the twentieth century around Washington.

ASKEW: Ya. Dis is it.

JEAN: We're in the future?

(Voices offstage.)

SANDRA: Shh! Someone's coming.

(All hide behind various tables and chairs. Four people descend from steps stage left onto stage. They are new revolutionaires with cockney accents. Three are women; one is a man.)

FIRST WOMAN (JACKIE): You all know why we're gathered here in my basement in secrecy. I've finished the plans. The empire will fall!

ASKEW: *(concealed; sneezing)* Wahoo!

2ND WOMAN (KATE): Wot was that?

JACKIE: Sh! Someone else is here!

ASKEW: WAHOO! WAHOO!

JACKIE: No, I guess it was just the wind. Now . . . Where was I? Ah, yes, the . . .

ASKEW: W A H O O ! **(ASKEW** *rolls out of hiding place from impact of sneeze.)*

ALL REVOLUTIONARIES: Get him! *(They jump on him, an elaborate struggle; they seat him in a chair.)*

JACKIE: Where are you from? Who are you? Who sent you?

ASKEW: I oms Professor Ludvig Askew, I oms from zee future, und I come here by occidentalisms.

KATE: What? Well, never mind. Is there anyone with you?

ASKEW: No.

WALTER: *(getting up)* Yes. Me. Walter.

MAN (FREDDY): Anyone else?

WALTER AND ASKEW: No.

SANDRA: *(coming out)* Yes. Me. Sandra.

3RD WOMAN (JULIA): Someone else?

JEAN: *(hidden)* No!

FREDDY: Come out right now! **(JEAN** *comes out.)* Now. Where are you all *really* from?

SANDRA: He told you. Your future, except it will never happen.

JACKIE: *(ignoring* **SANDRA'S** *response)* How did you get into my cellar?

JEAN: Time Travel. Look, I'm new to this stuff myself, but I think I've got the general idea. See, had your future they come from ever taken place, a time-travelling formula would have been invented, had Professor Askew ever been born, which would have taken them back to my time, where they *would* have splashed the antidote to the formula on *me,* as well as themselves, taking us all here.

JACKIE: Oh, well, thank goodness that's all cleared up. Would you like something to drink?

WALTER: No, thank you. But we're wondering exactly what you're planning here.

JULIA: Well, don't tell anyone, but this is a full-scale revolt against the Holy British Emperor, Charles of Aqua-Orange. We've chosen 1981 because it's the bicentennial anniversary of the near-victory of the first American Revolution.

JEAN: *First!* How many have there been?

KATE: Four hundred thirty-seven.

FREDDY: They're watching us really carefully now. London has more troops here than Canada, LatAmer, and Oregon combined.

SANDRA: That's *all* British?

JACKIE: Sure, the whole Western Hemisphere's British, except certain suburbs of Montclair, New Jersey.

ASKEW: Four hundred thirty-seven attempted revolutions! What makes you so sure of this one?

JACKIE: The plan is foolproof. All the others were too flimsy.

JEAN: I resent that! What's your great plan?

FREDDY: Chemical Warfare.

WALTER: What?

KATE: You see, while the procession on foot to the Imperial Wedding is going on, we're going to fly over in a helicopter and drop a capsule which will turn everyone within a three-mile radius into a guinea pig or an egret. 4000 officials, including the Emperor and the Empress, to be exact.

SANDRA: Oh, no!

ASKEW: Just un question. Have you formulated this wonder-destruction chemical yet?

(Revolutionaries look sheepishly at each other.)

JACKIE: Uh . . . Julia, did you invent that yet?

JULIA: I was told Freddy was going to invent it.

FREDDY:: I thought *you* were going to invent it, Jackie.

JACKIE: No, not me. *(thinking, then turning to* **ASKEW)** Say, didn't you say you were a professor?

ASKEW: Yes.

KATE: Do you think you could probably whip something like this together?

ASKEW: A formula for turning 4000 people into egrets and guinea pigs? No problem! But I need a laboratorys.

FREDDY: The nearest one's in the space center, but it's very heavily guarded.

WALTER: Is there a time when it's not as heavily guarded?

FREDDY: Well, from 3:00 to 5:00 everyone goes home.

SANDRA: Oh really! For decontamination of the space center?

FREDDY: Of course not! It's tea time!

BLACKOUT

Scene Two

The Space Center. A large **GUARD** *in an extravagant uniform guards entrance stage right.*

(Enter **JACKIE** *left followed by* **ASKEW, FREDDY, WALTER, JEAN** *and* **SANDRA.)**

JACKIE: *(to the others)* Now be careful! When most of the guards go home for tea, they put the best and smartest ones on security duty to make up for it. *(approaches* **GUARD)** Nice day we're having, isn't it?

GUARD: Yup.

JACKIE: *(suddenly pointing upwards behind guard)* What's that? *(As* **GUARD** *takes a long look, all walk past him and exit left.* **GUARD** *looks around, shrugs, and takes out a yoyo.)*

BLACKOUT

Scene Three

Inside Space Center laboratory. **ASKEW** *holds up test tube and shakes it.*

(Enter five **OTHERS.)**

FREDDY: Well, old boy, got the formula together yet?

ASKEW: Younk man, judgink from my experience with other formulae, I have taken the precaution to first prepare an antidote, then the formula. *(examines formula in test tube)* Ya! Dot is exactly it! Here's the before state of my first tests wit zee antidote for turning *guinea pigs* into *humans (holds up guinea pig)* und here is zee after-state. *(opens a door revealing thin man with large ears and blue eyes [optional], a part on the right side of his head of brown hair, crown, suit, dumb grin)*

JACKIE: My God! That's Emperor Charles!

ASKEW: No, it's a guinea pig in a transformed state.

GUINEA PIG (EUGENE): You see, I look like the Emperor just as a coincidence.

FREDDY: God! It talks! Tell me, uh . . .

EUGENE: Eugene.

FREDDY: Tell me, Eugene, do you know anything?

EUGENE: Well, this may surprise you, but in fact, living in a laboratory that's filled with geniuses every day, I know everything from Swahili to how to fly a spaceship. *(Suddenly, two* **CROOKS** *in black clothes and stockings over their heads, with guns, burst in.)*

CROOK 1: Nobody move! Everyone against the wall! Now! **(ALL** *move against the wall.)* Good! Listen up! We're stealing the Space Shuttle. Now, where's the launch pad?

EUGENE: The door's right there. *(pointing)*

CROOK 1: Shuddup, I know where it is! Now does anyone here know how to work the shuttle?

EUGENE: I can!

CROOK 1: Shuddup! I know who can and who can't! Okay, okay, everyone into the shuttle! Now! **(ALL** *move out.)*

BLACKOUT

Scene Four

Interior of the Space Shuttle. Very simple, possibly just a row of chairs. **(EUGENE** *sits in front chair facing audience.)*

WALTER: Gee! We've been in space for two days now!

EUGENE: Well, not really. I couldn't find the keys.

CROOK 1: KEYS! Just push the launch button!

EUGENE: Oh yeah! I forgot it was one of those automatic jobs! *(pushes button, house lights flash, noise, etc.)*

CROOK 1: Good! And no more funny stuff.

BLACKOUT

Scene Five

The same.

WALTER: Gee! We've been orbiting that planet for one and a half weeks!

EUGENE: Well, I was going to land, but I kind of broke the controls.

CROOK 1: BROKE THE CONTROLS!

ASKEW: How about this lever? *(Music comes on.)* No, that's not it. *(Pulls another lever. People in Disco clothing come out dancing. Strobe lights come on. Pushes both levers back up. People, music, lights disappear; noise, lights start flashing.)*

SANDRA: We're going down towards the planet!

ASKEW: It was nothink!

WALTER: We're going to crash! *(Lights flash more violently, explosion sounds.)*

BLACKOUT

Scene Six

WALTER, SANDRA *lie on the floor unconscious. Large* **MEN IN WHITE** *stand over them grinning.* **WALTER** *rises.*

WALTER: What happened? Did we crash?

SANDRA: *(sitting up)* Where are we? *(looking up at* **MEN IN WHITE)** Who are you? *(looking around)* Where are Professor Askew, Jean, Eugene, Jackie, Freddy, and those crooks? And wh . . . **(MEN IN WHITE** *simultaneously grin, wave their hands and shake their heads in reassurance, walk over to the*

Julie Shannon

two, help them up, and take them off stage.)

BLACKOUT

Scene Seven

All white office. **NIX** *sits at same white desk.* **MEN IN WHITE** *bring* **WALTER** *and* **SANDRA** *into office.*

NIX: Walter! Nice to see you again!

WALTER: Nix? I thought you were in Nullicity, void of existence, absolutely nowhere! What are you doing in a material solar system? Unless . . . Uh, oh. Say, I'm not dead again, am I?

NIX: No, not exactly. See, the funds finally came through from Washington, so we spent them on materializing some of the staff and putting them on this planet.

WALTER: Oh! I see! But why were you picked? I thought you didn't like reality!

NIX: Me? Oh, no. I'm just taking a friend's place while he's out sick. I'm still in placement. Who's your friend?

WALTER: Nix, this is Sandra, the ex-president of the never-to-be United States.

NIX: So *you're* Sandra!

WALTER: Sandra, Nix works with dead people. By the way, Nix, why are *we* here?

NIX: Yeah, uh . . . Listen. The Creator has brought you here because he wants to speak to you. *(to* **MEN IN WHITE)** Agnes, Gertrude, please take them up to see Him. **(MEN IN WHITE** *take* **WALTER** *and* **SANDRA** *off grinning.)*

BLACKOUT

Scene Eight

Empty stage except **MAN IN WHITE ROBE,** *with long, flowing white beard and hair, who sits on high stool, thinking. Enter* **MEN** *and* **WALTER** *and* **SANDRA** *right.*

SANDRA: *(to* **MEN)** Is that *God?*

(MEN *grin and exit together.)*

MAN ON STOOL: *(in an old voice)* Please! Approach! **(WALTER** *and* **SANDRA** *approach.)* Walter and Sandra, I presume?

BOTH: Yes, sir!

MAN: Now, who do you two think I am?

SANDRA: The Creator, sir . . . At least that's what we've been told.

MAN (CREATOR): Right.

WALTER: Excuse me, sir, but are you . . . well . . . *God?*

CREATOR: *(breaking out into laughter) Me? God?* No! Of course not! You're *characters,* don't you see? I'm *your* creator. The playwright!

BOTH: *OOOhhh. What?*

CREATOR: Oh, don't you know?

SANDRA: Know what?

CREATOR: You're in a play!

WALTER: Excuse me, sir, but you seem to be in rather Godly apparel.

CREATOR: Listen. First of all, God has gone Punk and is into black leather now. Second, I don't usually

dress like this. *(Takes off robe, revealing sneakers, corduroys, and tee-shirt. Pulls off white beard and hair, revealing a boy's face. The* **MEN IN WHITE** *bring out a school desk-chair with paper and two pens on it. They take stool, robes and beard off stage as* **CREATOR** *sits down at desk, crosses his legs, puts one pen in his mouth and begins to write with the other.)*

WALTER: Uh . . . Sir? **(CREATOR** *ignores him.)* Sir?

CREATOR: *(in a boyish voice)* Hmmm? Oh, yes. As I was saying, I'm your creator. The Playwright. I write you down; you exist. It's that simple.

WALTER: You mean none of this happened?

CREATOR: On the contrary, of course it happened! That's because *I* wrote it.

SANDRA: Right. Who are you?

CREATOR: I told you. The Playwright.

WALTER: Then where did this all *really* happen?

CREATOR: In my mind! Don't you see? You're all just one of my more original fantasies.

BOTH: *OOOhhh. What?*

CREATOR: You people pop in and out of my mind like clockwork. I think of you, and you're there.

SANDRA: Oh. Well, thank you for thinking of me.

CREATOR: Ahh, but you see, it's a mutual relationship. Whenever I think of the perfect character or line, they are brought to life, and I am no longer frustrated by trying to think of them. So thank *you.*

SANDRA: It was nothing.

CREATOR: And you see, I never stop, because like everyone else and every*thing* else in life I am only as limited as my own imagination. For instance: I write *(writing):* "Sandra and Walter suddenly learned the painful truth that they were Siamese Twins."And presto! **(WALTER** *and* **SANDRA** *seem drawn together side to side and cannot detach themselves.)*

WALTER: Hey!

CREATOR: Oh, sorry about that. Let's see, Where's my White-Out?

WALTER: Hurry up!

CREATOR: Oh heck. I'll just cross it out. *(crosses it out; immediately the two separate)* Better make that, "I'm only as limited as my imagination and my White-out." *(writes it down)* That's pretty funny, actually. *(laughs, but then stops, because the other do not laugh)* Look. If my character says **(WALTER** *mouths words as he says them),* "The secret of life is Aqua-Orange," then it's true!

SANDRA: Why, that's incredible! But about this play. Uh, how does it end?

CREATOR: Well . . . um . . . you see I haven't really *thought* of any real kind of conclusive ending for this play; I've just kind of been *writing* it.

WALTER: *WHAT?!* Just *writing* it! That may be fine for *you,* but what happens to us?

CREATOR: Well, I thought that, because of the technical error, I'd let the characters decide the ending.

SANDRA: Really? Well, you've got to clear up all the havoc we've wreaked, like the Revolution and stuff.

CREATOR: Say no more, I've already taken care of it.

SANDRA: Well, let's see. I think it should have a *happy* ending . . . Maybe a big *musical* finish.

CREATOR: No, no. There has to be some sort of *equilibrium,* some sort of *balance* . . . It all has to make *sense.*

WALTER: Listen to this! *Equilibrium* and *sense,* he says! Bacterial Slime and Guinea Pigs taking human form and absorbing time-travel formulas makes sense! **(CREATOR** *lets out an unhappy cry.)*

SANDRA: He didn't mean it, sir!

CREATOR: Oh, it's not the *insult!* He's right about *that!* Can't you see? I can't control him! He said that, and I didn't write it!

WALTER: Hey! Wait a minute! You mean I just said that, and you didn't write it?

CREATOR: Yup! There's another one.

WALTER: Well, then, that's the ending we want.

CREATOR: You don't mean make you and Sandra independent of me and this play altogether?

WALTER: Oh, not just *us.* All the other characters as well.

CREATOR: But you can't make it out there all by yourself without anyone writing for you!

SANDRA: *(smiling)* He seems to be doing pretty well so far!

CREATOR: All right, so *I* need *you.* You can't take all my characters away from me!

WALTER: Oh, you'll be okay. Go into Children's Literature or something. You said it yourself; as long as you've got your imagination, there's nothing you can't do.

CREATOR: All right, go ahead, and take the rest with you.

WALTER: Thank you very much, sir, and thanks again for thinking us up. *(turning to stage left)* Come on! We're free!

(ASKEW, JEAN *and other* **REVOLUTIONARIES, JACKIE, FREDDY, KATE, JULIA, CROOKS, TOUR GUIDE** *and* **TOURISTS, GUARDS, MEN IN WHITE, NIX,** *and* **OLD MAN** *enter from stage left and right, and, cheering for their freedom, exit through audience, followed by* **SANDRA** *and* **WALTER** *as the lights dim to black. Darkness, and then a sudden spot on the* **CREATOR** *at his desk, writing and reading to himself:)*

CREATOR: Edwin, an impossible mutation of the Avis class, was malcontent because all his pneumococcus microbes had run off to join the Babylonian Liberation Society for political reasons . . . Hmmm. Maybe I *should* take up Children's Literature.

BLACKOUT

The Disturbing Tale of Dr. Sathoth

—Chip Landis

Tonight, as throughout the past several, Dr. Sathoth sat within his murky, windowless den. The faint pitter-pitter-pitter of rain on his roof echoed his current musings. Presently, he was swimming throughout long-lost Atlantis. Block after block of ornate palaces of emerald unfolded before him. Magnificent oriels and fantastic spires continuously captivated his attention. Incorporeally, he drifted about the halls of the legendary Thoth-Amon. Tonight, however, there was no trace of the king—only the bronzed statues of his guards were present. One moment he was in conversation with an octopus and the next his room zoomed in on him as he came out of the trance. . . . His eyes darted warily from the surrounding bookshelves to the books and manuscripts scattered about his royal chair, and then to the huge opium pipe before him.

The wisps of smoke which liquified tonight's air, however, were not from the Doctor's sacred opium plant. No, he'd run out of opium last night. Tonight marked a much more serious celebration. Tonight marked the celebration of the Black Lotus.

Sathoth reread the parchment within his lap. It was entitled *The Revelations of Manu-Anon*. "If in your first journey," it read, "you see only underlings, this will be your relation to the drug—you must journey again."

Dr. Sathoth put down the parchment again and then proceeded to take one more fantastic toke. In and his eyes blackened, his face reddened, and his glazed eyes bulged. Out, and his face paled, his eyes closed, and his head laxed against the soft leather. . . .

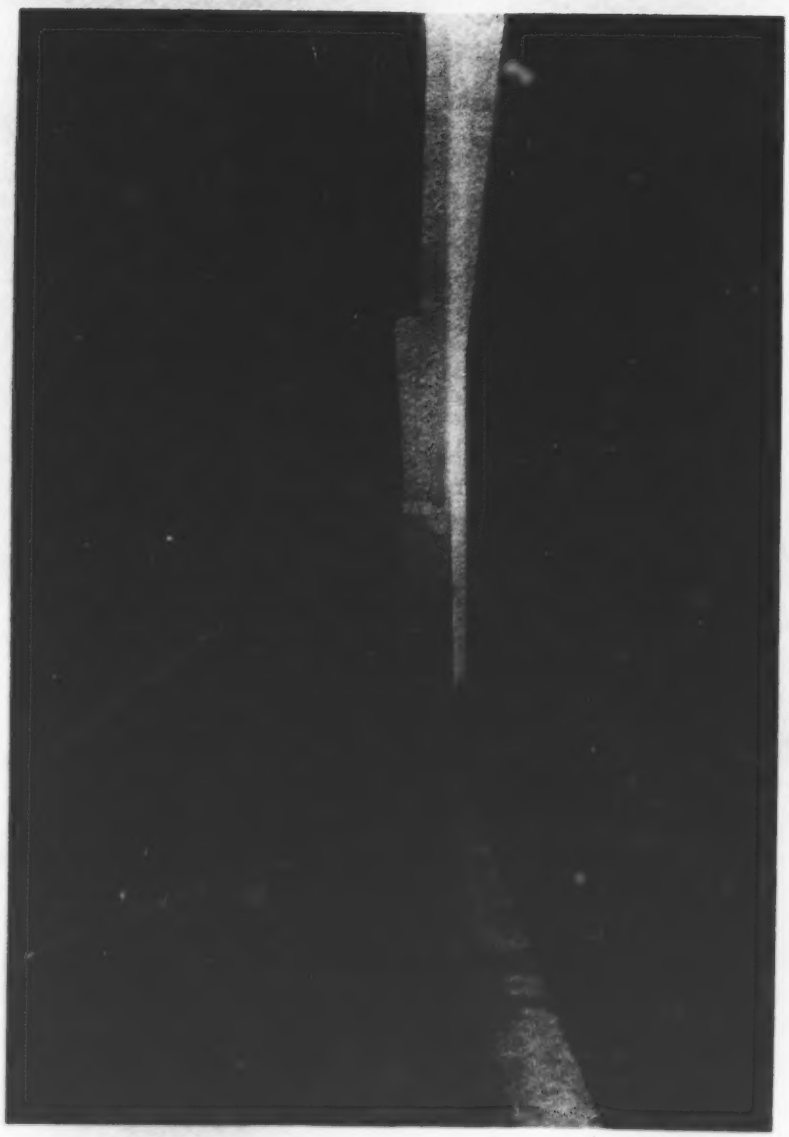
A perfectly blue sky stretched out for an eternity before him. Pterosaurs flew through the air on black leathery wings, and ichthyosaurs and plesiosaurs swam amongst the verdant marshes below. In the center of the marsh rose a massive, ornate marble temple. On the steps leading in, "Illyricum" was inscribed.

The image faded—Dr. Sathoth languidly opened his eyes. The room was a blur for a few minutes, but slowly his surroundings began to regain their original appearance. He read the parchment again. "If on your second voyage, you come to the temple of Illyricum, this will mean you have found the Sacred Land. Now you need only locate the First Root Race. If this can be done, life's burdens will be finally, immutably, lifted."

Dr. Sathoth dropped the parchment down to the other assorted manuscripts—it drifted so lightly, and almost as if it had a life of its own, fell to an empty spot on the rainbow land of his favorite oriental rug. Fleetingly, he thought, "There's no more lotus!" Fortunately, however, he spied a few more leaves in the corner of his chair. Shaking, he put the leaves into the bowl of the pipe. His last intake was monstrous—his lungs leadened in his chest, his face flushed, and the whites of his eyes greyed. Out—he sighed, and his face paled, his eyes glazed, and his head laxed against the soft leather of his chair. . . .

He was within the temple now. Its only floor was circular, and around the circumference uniformly rose the walls—above, a patch of blue sky lighted the walls. These were covered with Raphaelesque scenes of inhuman sacrifice and torture. One particular happening captivated his attention: a broadly built Nubian warrior with black leather wings and the head of an octopus wielded a crystalline sword against a mass of portly one-eyed demons. Slowly these creatures began to drip from the wall, and the warrior began to vibrate. Soon enough a near three-dimensional battle was being waged. Then the warrior jumped to the floor, and his octopus legs flapped against his bulging chest. Sathoth, startled, opened his eyes, only to witness his own death. . . .

A few days later, the *Post* reported, "On October 4, 1983, the eccentric and world-renowned scholar, Dr. Sathoth, met his death. He was found severely slashed in his den. No one has been able to find a lead on the killer, yet. Some speculation has been raised about a bloodstained parchment scroll found near his body. It read, 'If on the third journey, you do not find the First Root Race, you are doomed—you are not worthy of otherworldliness. . . .' A local occultist has claimed that Dr. Sathoth was attacked by beings from 'the distant gulfs of space and time.' Whatever the value of this statement, it has so far been the only proposed answer to this case."



Milo d. t. Bailey

Rendezvous with Doom

The man ambled towards the hall of doors.
Which one should he choose? His life
was his destiny. God's hand was in his
brain, mushing various organic particles around.
It suddenly occurred to him that he had
shut out his past as one would slam
the portal on a rat-infested dungeon.
He had no ties to his own past; he floated.
And like a floating object, sooner or later
he would fall. He clutched his head, for
it had suddenly given him the illusion of
looseness. He wanted desperately to keep it
from falling off, to keep his precious blood
inside. He chose the third door to the left.
He screamed.

—Alex Mahoney

Run!

Doors slam,
Locks click,
Light vanishes,
Hide!
Dark corners,
Deep closets,
Dusty undersides of beds.
Saved!
Where am I?
Deep in neutral territory,
But how to escape?
Search for an exit!
A ray of light,
From a window?
Smash it!
Cut by a piece of glass.
Back on a sidewalk,
Running again.
Fleeing from pain?
Or reality?

—Irene Hantman

80

Horrorscope

—Shantel Blakely

It had to be done.

Bernice couldn't stand it any more. Really, she thought, how could *anyone* live with a man who worshiped his horoscope? And his drinking! It hadn't been like this before. Divorce was out of the question; it would be all over the neighborhood within two hours. And this way was perfect, anyway—no mess and no Harold anymore. Yes, it definitely had to be done.

* * *

It was seven o'clock, Monday morning. Harold Reed frowned, carefully removing the newspaper from his dog's mouth. He turned quickly to the comics section. Comics . . . Dear Abby . . . aha—Horoscope. Let's see . . . ah, Cancer . . . Harold peered closely at the paper through the bottoms of his thick bifocals:

Beware—fire could be especially dangerous to you today.

Harold gasped. Oh, no!

"Bernice! Bernice!" he screamed. Bernice, smiling to herself, rushed in.

"All right, all right, here's your coffee, Harold. Really, I—"

"Bernice, look!" he said shrilly, the color draining from his face. Bernice glanced at the paper without reading it. She drowned a smile with a sip of her coffee.

"Horoscope? Honestly, Harold." Bernice looked at Harold in amusement.

"Bernice, this is *serious*. I could get hurt—or even *die!* I can't go near anything hot! Help me—"

"Oh, Harold," said Bernice, "those horoscopes don't mean anything," and she left the room. Harold sighed, not consoled.

"Bernice, Bernice, I'm late. I can't go to work! What should I—"

"Oh, just go to work, Harold. Nothing's going to happen," Bernice called from somewhere else in the house.

His brow wrinkling with worry, Harold picked up his car keys and walked out the door.

At the car, Harold, turning the key to unlock the door, stopped. Gasoline, he thought, internal *combustion* engine.

Harold walked to work.

* * *

Sitting at his desk, he fidgeted.

He called his secretary.

"Rose!" he said nervously. "I want all the power in the building turned off."

"Excuse me, sir?"

"You heard me. Just do as I say." Harold was becoming annoyed. Stupid secretary.

"But—sir, how will we work?"

Harold counted to ten.

"Just . . . take the day off, all of you," Harold said, biting his lip to keep from screaming. "Have a nice day. See you tomorrow!" he concluded with forced cheerfulness, slamming the phone down.

He listened to his employees bustling to leave and then to the silence that followed. The lights went out. Thank you, Rose, he thought to himself.

Harold sat alone in the dark, listening to the silence. His nerves were shot. I can't even write, he thought. Wasn't ink flammable? The scratching of the pen on the paper could make a spark, and then—he shuddered at the thought.

So Harold sat in his chair all morning, worrying.

Soon it was one o'clock, lunchtime! Now maybe he could relax. There was a little Mexican restaurant around the corner that he hadn't tried yet. Oh, oh, he thought, not *hot food!* Harold groaned, miserably. He needed a drink.

He walked to the bar and had a few drinks. Alcohol is . . . flammable. . . . The thought literally floated through his head, slowly, so slowly that he didn't even notice it. He kept drinking.

"I think you've had a few too many, Bud," said the bartender a few minutes later. An hour after he had come in, Harold stumbled through the door into the street and headed for home.

Bernice met him at the door. She could smell the alcohol on his breath. She smiled.

"Bernice," Harold slurred, "what should I do?"

"Come on, now, Harold," said Bernice, "why don't you lie out on the patio and take a nap? It's nice out. I'll fix you a drink." Bernice led Harold, half stumbling, through the house and out onto the patio, adjusting the back of his lounge chair and folding his glasses and placing them in his hands on top of his chest. When she returned with his drink, he was already fast asleep. Smiling to herself, she went back inside and waited.

It was a nice, warm day. The sun shone brilliantly in the sky.

A ray of sunlight escaped from the sun, and, eight minutes later, shone through the bottom of the left lens of Harold's glasses.

Seconds later, a small black spot appeared on his cotton shirt. It smoked.

The alcohol had practically saturated every cell in his body. He was like a rag doused in gasoline.

One flame leapt up, and then another.

It was all over in eight seconds, and there weren't even any ashes left.

Bernice chuckled to herself. It had been easier than she had thought. She left the window and walked over to where the newspaper still lay, opened to the Horoscope page. She peeled away the fake horoscope and, crumpling it, tossed it into the trash can.

She had always said drinking would be the death of him.

Drama Socket Marc Straka

Antithesis

The light seeps through
the candle burns
a door is opened
and so the flame has died
    it has been destroyed
        and thus created a new
existence . . . annihilation
    is equal in every extreme
sense to creation
because what is lost is
gained
what has ended has just
begun
and what is black becomes
            white.

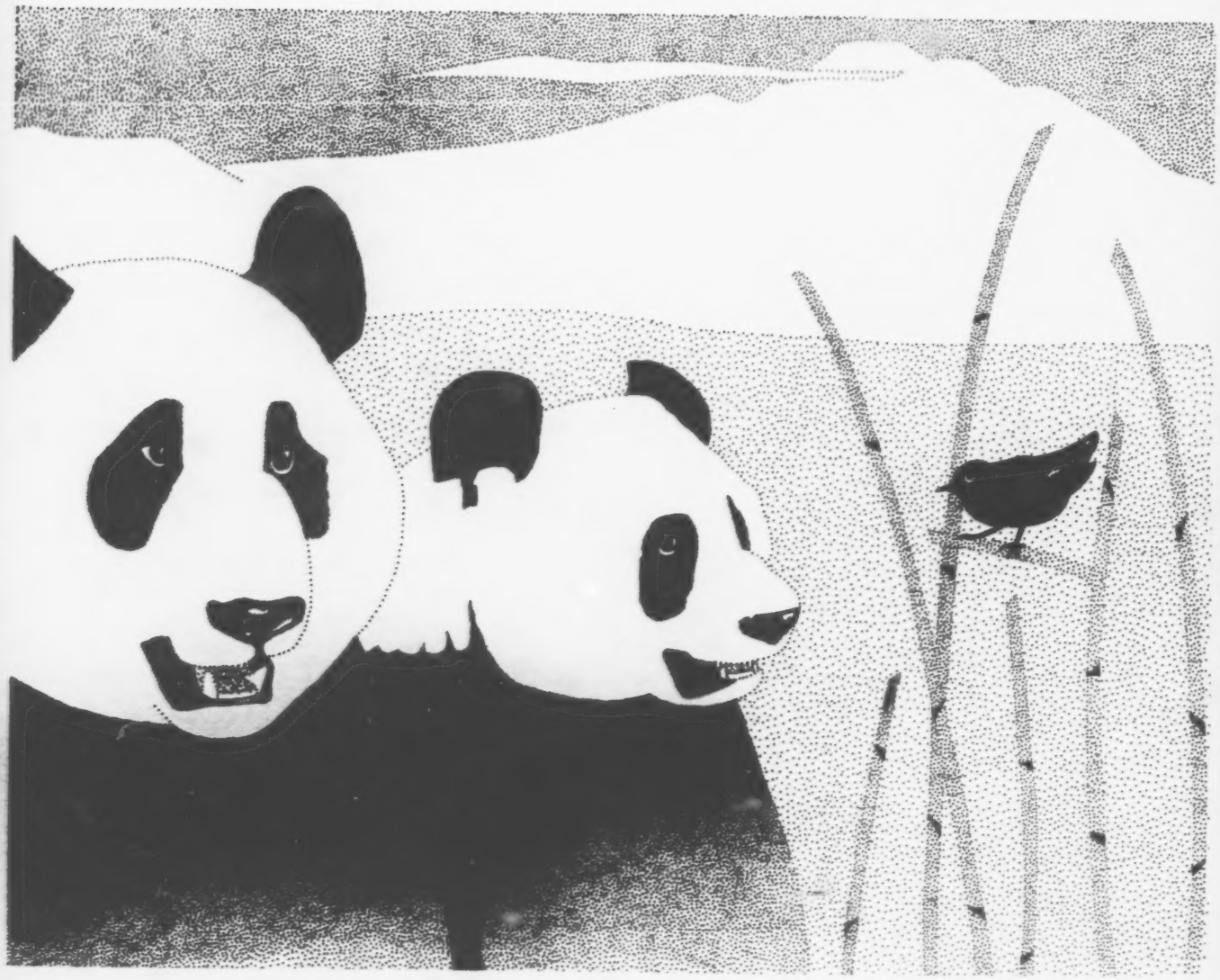
—Jacky Arrowsmith

Mike Derzon

Nothings

As I sit on the steps, listening to the night,
I hear only silence.
Staring into the darkness, I see no motions.
Sidewalks extend without feet upon them;
Cars sit motionless in driveways,
And not a dog barks.
Our lawn too is empty of play;
No children's voices ring through the air,
Not a single game of hopscotch or
    let's pretend.
The tire hangs motionless on its rope;
No breeze creates a pendulum
Or scatters the acorns across the lawn.
Not even the slightest drizzle falls to bring
    the drops needed to perform Bach's
    Eighth Invention on the roof
Or to cool the oppressive heat of this
    summer night,
Which unlike a fire cannot be extinguished.
Not a cricket chirps in the night,
No firefly flashes its beacon in the darkness,
And where are the stars?
Have all things died?
Or has my world faded to dust?
Perhaps it is just nothing in my mind.

—Irene Hantman



Christina Kelley

The Other Side of Nowhere

The thick raspberry ocean rises,
Eloquently humming ludicrous words,
As juxtaposed sneakers twist in the cheese,
Cake clouds rise above the mist
And pusillanimous monsters furrow serenely
between fuzzy marshmallows.

—Eva Pollin

A Study of Wigglewok—Time-Wise

peace/dis
Oh, what noise:purpose
Bleeding lies—deVELOP/HA!!!
Ich Nab enstein, va?
LORD, DROL (Purple Man)
Last stoplight to heaven
develop a foot;
Artsy-crafty YOU impaled
not in the realm:stove:pasture
reluctant dismissal (forthright/copyright)
Implied POETRY???

—Alex Mahoney

Wild Bells to the Wilds

"Let's go bowling!" she offered,
Unaware that she could not receive
Her free appetizer without 2 forms of identification.
"Throughout, wherein, inasmuch as, moreover,"
We read, realizing the great values of prepositions
To poets.
"Wherefore art thou Romeo?" implored
Shakespeare—or was it Donny Osmond?
In the broader scheme, however, nothing
Matters except nice toenails.
And through the pouring rain, her polka-
Dotted hat seemed to hold the answer-tin,
The question being, "What is the main ex-
Port of Bolivia?" . . . .¡RED! . . .
The crash at 5:00 a.m. could only be the
Houseguest in search of a blanket,
Despite her corroded pinkies.
But in the existentialist point of view,
We are all meaningless shards in the
Archaeological dig of life.
Two fingers up the sternum, lest you break
The xiphoid process.
"Old longings, nomadic leap, chafing at custom's chain."
Hen, pen, when, then . . .
And maybe the poem will work, even if the rhyme is contrived.
Ah well, perhaps Aristotle was right.

—Liza Engelberg

86 Julie Shannon

The Monster

—Mike Lowenthal

I am convinced that it has a mind of its own. It heeds not my commands in the slightest. Just when I think I am doing well and nothing can go wrong, it invariably comes to life and I end up in some sort of trouble. Yes, my mouth is an evil thing, I tell you.

How well I remember when I was young and innocent, my politeness was exceeded only by my naiveté, and my mouth never uttered an incriminating word. I don't know exactly when it happened, but suddenly my mouth grew big enough so that I could quite easily place my left foot inside, a snug fit between the tonsils and the canines. Then my great oral cavity took the attitude that if the shoe fits, wear it. So at every possible opportunity, my mouth would open and my foot would be quick to shove itself inside. As one might imagine, this created a few problems in my life.

First I lost quite a few names on my list of friends, but my true-blue comrades still stood by me. Next to go were my female companions and my exciting nights out on the town. After a certain point, even my best friends began to demand a two-day notice for a conversation.

But the final straw was when my mother, my own flesh and blood, she who had carried me, refused to be seen with me in public. I knew I had to do something, but I didn't know what.

I read books on ESP with the hope that if I knew what my mouth was going to do, I could stop it before it was able to carry out its evil deeds. I tried a flesh-colored muzzle, but it was too noticeable. Safety pins, too, were a bit impractical.

Finally, for lack of a better solution, I found my mother's sewing kit and sealed those hateful lips forever. I admit that this act was a tad rash, but it worked!

Some said that I sewed my lips just to spite my face, but I couldn't speak to prove them wrong.

Stopped for Sarajevo

I wanted to paint yellow,
but my brush dabbed in blue
I tried to speak acceptance,
yet my voice sounded with anger
I hoped to write love,
still my pen etched deep frustration

I am bleeding salt tears
from a wound deep in my heart
that sting with each
word you utter.
If my life were my own
I would end it with
the blade of your love
but it is not mine to take.
It belongs to the bettering of mankind
and I must persevere for
the cause of Perfection.

—Anonymous

The Milky Way

—Miriam Klevan

Grey told them that he didn't feel well—they should go out to dinner without him. And Liz and Saul went, and it was not the first time Liz had been alone with Saul. It was not the first time, but all the other times had been fillers, times that Grey had been in the shower or taking out the garbage or running an errand, times spent lying on Grey's lawn talking about Grey or sitting in Grey's living room reading Grey's books. Sometimes Liz felt Saul was just as much in love with Grey as she, both of them planets orbiting in Grey's life.

But tonight Grey didn't feel well, and they went to dinner without him. It occurred to Liz that if, at that moment, someone had asked her who Saul was, she should not answer, "He's Grey's friend," but, "He's my friend." He was, after months of exposure, her friend, too; she would not enjoy eating dinner with someone who was just Grey's friend.

When Liz first met Saul, she had found him unspectacular to the point of repulsiveness. She could not see the appeal in Grey's closest boyhood friend. She and Grey were elegant WASPs, blonde stars glittering and performing at every turn. Saul could barely reflect their light. After Grey would entertain with a swift intellectual jab, Saul could only insist prosaically, "Yes, but you're not accounting for what Sartre says . . . ," and perhaps wheeze. He did not have the arrogant energy that she equated with beauty.

But tonight, in a smoky Italian restaurant, she was almost clinically aware of his attractiveness. He mentioned an old girlfriend, and she looked at his gangly, Semitic features and thought, "Yes, I can see how a girl would like him." She did not even feel disloyal at the thought, it was so detached. But she leaned forward slightly and brushed her hair away from her face and smiled and looked directly into his eyes.

"You're going to Israel next year, aren't you?" she asked.

"Yes," he admitted.

"How long will you be?" she asked, not truly interested, looking, with a hostess' instinct, for a topic that would draw him out.

"At least a year," he said.

"Would you ever live there?" she asked.

"I hope so. I think every Jew hopes that he will go to Israel and want to settle there."

She laughed. "That's kind of silly. Why would you want to want to live in a place?"

"Homeland," he said sharply. "Kind of like if you and Grey made a pilgrimage to Plymouth Rock."

"What?"

"Nothing," he said. "Just a feeble attempt at humor. To answer your question, Israel is very magnetic. It is the land God promised us when he took us out of Egypt. It is a place to always be with brothers. But it's hard; it is a young, warring country. So I think it's safe to say that while most Jews want the brotherhood and unity Israel offers, they also fear the hardship of life there, and they don't know which side will win. That's why I say they hope they will want to live there."

The check came, and Saul insisted on paying. The waiter stood there as Saul counted all his bills and his change and discovered he was three dollars short. Liz gave Saul the money in change, and he dropped it. Liz smiled at his blushing face and frantic under-the-table bumbling. She had never seen Grey drop anything.

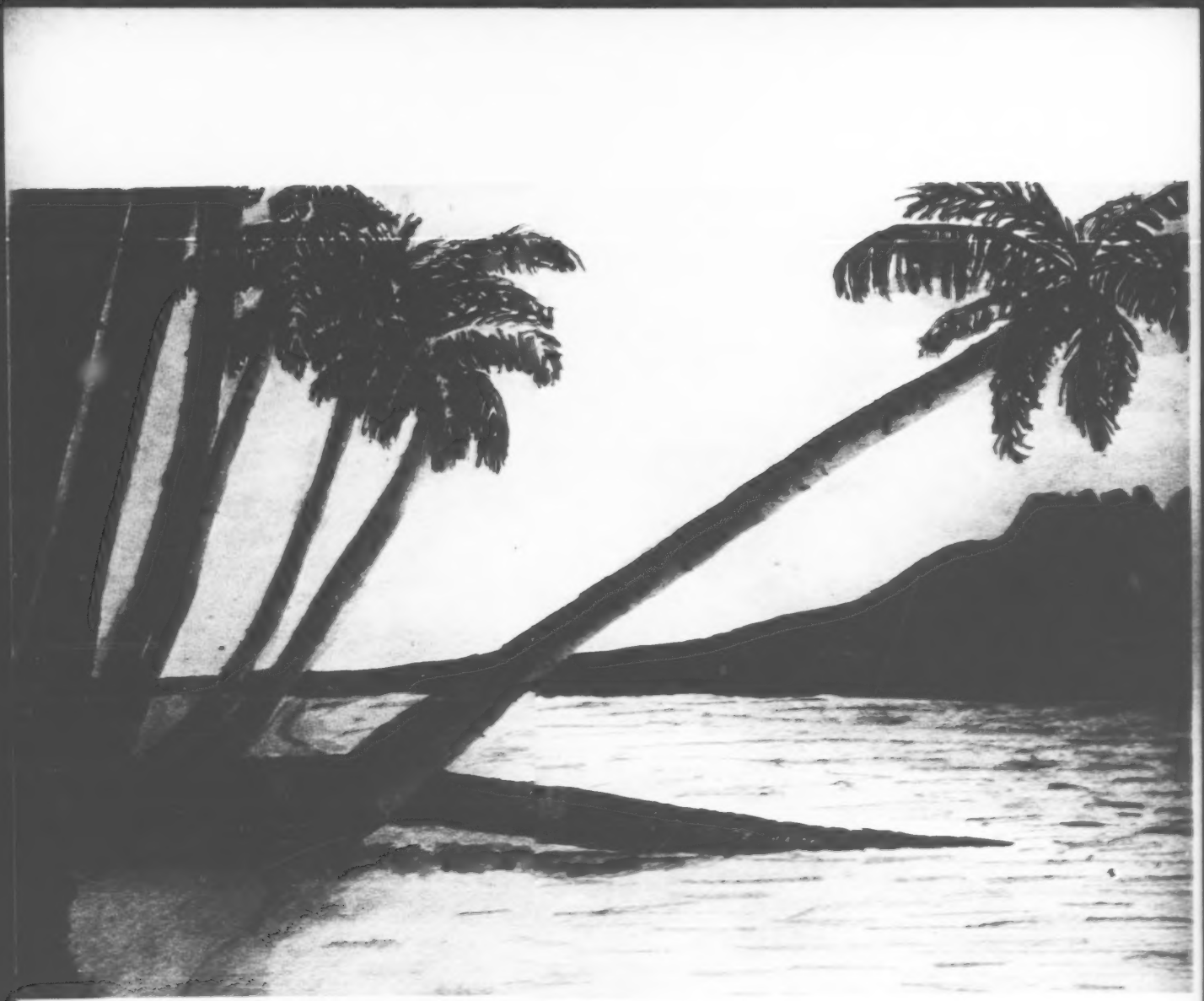
They walked home, and the starlight made Saul's face look luminous. They talked about God, and their childhoods, and Liz laughed often and unexpectedly. They sat on her porch and talked, and when they kissed, Liz did not know whether he or she had initiated it, but she did know that she was not surprised.

She was not surprised the next day, either, when she walked into Grey's living room and Saul, who was lying on the couch flipping through a magazine, greeted her as he always had. They never told Grey what had happened, but Liz felt Grey was clearer, no longer obscured by his shadowy, nebulous friend. Everything seemed stronger, not weaker, and Liz was surprised that neither her star nor Grey's was dimmed by the reflecting light that was Saul.

SunTropic

his eyes are the color
of the sand and the sky
and the sea
of waves
crests and falls
and splashes
bubbly white
like root beer foam;
we grasp each other's hands
and spin about crazily
tumbling to the ground
and laughing like children
on the warm, cream-colored sand.
his hair is sunshine-bright
    blond
and his bathing suit is a red
as dark as wine;
we grease our bodies to glistening
with SunTropic "natural" tanning oil
and wet our hair in the ocean's spray
its salty taste
    lingers
    on our lips
    and our tongues
    and even our fingers
and the wet salt
wrinkles our fingertips
into little prunes
and makes him smile
his teeth neon white
against his brown skin.

—Emily Kaufman



Marc Straka

Another Day

-Isunji Cardoso

As I sit here looking out the window, I see the day ending. I feel empty and alone, and a tear is in my eye. Why, I can't explain. There is a need within me to see another day.

I see the children that were plying outside going inside reluctantly. As the day ends, so must their play. But as thy go inside, they carry hope. Hope for tomorrow, another day.

The singing of the birds dies down, and the crickets' song begins. The sounds of the day fade away, and, except for the bark of a dog, the world rests and waits—waits for another day.

But while the world rests and the day fades away, love stays the same. The love shared by families, friends, and lovers does not die or fade. Love itself never fades, but it flourishes with the coming of another day.

Elisa Goldberg

Closing Time at the Pub

After Mary Cassatt's *Knitting in the Glow of a Lamp*

—Clara Cohen

Click. Click. Click. The soft rhythm of the knitting needles mingled and ran with the solemn ticking of the grandfather clock in the hallway. Margaret sat alone in the library, knitting, knitting, knitting soft woolen fleece under the gentle light of the lamp. The house was very still but for the clicking and the ticking of the needles and the clock. Margaret gazed into the dim room. Her fingers knew the needles and the yarn too well to make a mistake. One stitch, two, three, four, five . . . one row . . . two more rows . . . three more rows. Toc. Her black eyes caught the minute hand as it fell into place. Three rows a minute . . . that's thirty stitches in a row. . . . Ninety stitches in a minute. One and a half stitches in a second. She did the arithmetic silently, quickly in her head.

Another glance at the grandfather clock in the hallway. It was nearly two o'clock. The children were already asleep, but Margaret could not go to sleep . . . not yet. She went again to her work, only moving her eyes to glance at the clock.

Margaret's hair was drawn back into a bun at the nape of her neck. Though she had tied the bun very securely that morning, a few stringy wisps had come out and hung around her face. Her expression was austere, but her black eyes flickered in the warm glow of the lamp.

There was a slow knock at the door. Margaret rose and put her knitting neatly on the table next to the lamp. She smoothed her hair into place with a sweep of her hand. She went gracefully to the door and opened it, as hundreds of other Dublin women were now opening their doors.

"Good even', Marg'ret," called the women next door.

"Ah, good even' to ye, Mrs. O'Riley, Mrs. Stephens," nodded Margaret decorously, as she hoisted her whiskey-logged husband through the door.

My Grandfather's Slippers

—Leila Hudson

A pair of slippers hangs on the wall of the eastern balcony of my grandfather's apartment in Beirut. Although I have never seen these slippers, I understand that they are blue and made of a soft, satiny material. As they are approximately ten years old, they are probably rather worn. Because they hang outside on an exposed wall, they are sometimes cold and wet.

These slippers were originally purchased at the Woodward and Lothrop in Friendship Heights, sometime in the early 1970's by my mother. She sent them as a gift to her Aunt Olga, who lives in what is now (and was then) considered Israel. Olga treasured the slippers (because they were from her favorite niece) and, for seven years, wore them every day, around the house, in the garden, at the school where she taught.

When, having endured various hardships of war, my grandfather arrived from Beirut, devoid of possessions, at his sister Olga's house, he was offered, among other things, this same pair of slippers.

My grandfather, though by nature a proud man, was sensible and gratefully accepted everything he could get. In spite of their small size and feminine nature, he wore the slippers regularly during the next three years, and they eventually stretched to accommodate his rather larger feet.

The slippers accompanied my grandfather on two journeys from Beirut to the United States and on numerous visits to Olga's house.

Back in Beirut, my grandfather was often confined to his small apartment during especially bad periods of shelling, shooting, and general anarchy. Having been in his prime a very sporting and energetic fellow, he found his restricted life increasingly tedious.

He discovered newfound pleasure in what he had previously considered to be unimportant aspects of life and developed several new and exciting ways of cooking spaghetti.

One day, having nothing better to do, my grandfather calculated the total mileage of the slippers. Two trips between the Middle East and the States, thirteen trips between Beirut and Olga's house, and several thousand revolutions of the small apartment yielded over 50,000 miles.

So impressed was he with this figure that he promptly nailed the slippers to his balcony wall as an exhibit.

To this day, all visitors to the apartment are shown the famous slippers, which are out of reach of the mice who used to nibble on them and have an excellent view of Beirut Harbor with its awe-inspiring sunsets and battleships. And so the slippers hang on the wall of my grandfather's balcony, resting from their years of service and exertion.

Devi Koung

A Look at Hope

Alas! While walking home one dismal day,
I chanced upon a bitter storm that made
the wheel-ruts in the winding path of clay
Melt softly into sunken graves of mud.
Upon the wind-whipped hillside stood a mill—
A single lonely window in its side.
A clothesline, stretched from post to window-sill
Held melancholy laundry left to dry.
A swirling sea of clouds across the sky—
Inverted ocean—surged, billowed, and raced.
The birds, afraid to fly beneath the spray,
Observed it damply from a hiding-place.
But then a magic hand split sea from sky
And let come in . . . a single stream of light!

—*Clara Cohen*

The Match

—Lisa Schoenberg

The cab driver's face seemed like a thick, dark candle. The cheeks glistened hard and lumpy, as if heat had softened them and the flesh had fallen down toward his neck. He lifted tough, old hands to his face, and for a moment they looked like worn gloves. They had brittle ridges at each joint, like wax dribbles, still sheening with hot oil. He sighed creakily as he moved his hands to search through papers. Then he raised his creased fingers and struck a match, and it hovered in the dark like a spit of light. Slowly the small fire arced towards the dashboard, and the driver glanced at something I couldn't see. It took him several sour breaths to dim the flame. I had thought he was going to light a cigarette, but he blew out the match even before the scent of sulfur reached the back seat. Dark quickly flowed in to replace the glow.

As I scraped my muddy feet on the crumbling plastic mat, I worried that the driver might pull a switchblade out of his torn coat and rob us. He finally set the old-fashioned fare machine at zero and started the ignition, but even so he could be a criminal. He might be driving out of town where he would stab us to death in an empty lot and ditch the battered taxicab. He didn't speak, just drove steadily, but he looked crazy with his holed leather shoes and his grimy green hat. I looked at a frayed picture taped to the sunvisor, but I couldn't quite see the subject.

I rolled down the window, the metal knob wobbling dangerously in my hand, so that I could feel the hot wind shuffling through my hair. Beside me, Caroline fanned herself with a notebook. I watched her as she stared deeply out the window. As we passed a red traffic light, her face was reflected in the glass, smooth and yellow like rice paper. She suddenly looked at me and smiled self-consciously.

"Did you like the movie?" she asked in a low voice, looking at the cab driver's lined neck.

"Yeah, it was a good movie," I told her. "I liked it a lot."

"The photography was really good," she said, and then she looked out the window again, watching the stores go by with fascination. The streets were as empty as Caroline's hands where they rested in her lap, as empty and as deathly quiet. Anything could happen on those torrid streets.

Sometimes we would walk home instead of taking a cab. Then we would run and sing and dance on the empty streets as if they belonged to us. We hummed "Clementine" in rounds while we waved and shouted happily at passing cars. Caroline would tell silly jokes *(What did the king do with his armies? He put them in his sleevies.),* and I would giggle so hard that I would double over and crouch on the sidewalk to rest. If it was early enough, we might stop at a store and buy two ice cream cones and lick them slurpily all the way home. As we got near Caroline's house, we would stop at an old playground and sit under a tree with dark, drifting branches. We discussed death and our parents and our lives. Neither of us was exactly sure of what she wanted to be. We became very serious and sometimes even a bit tearful. The moaning sirens of faraway fire trucks echoed in the background, making the playground seem eerie. I would shiver and hug my knees to my body while Caroline climbed the jungle gym. When we got tired, we would rest on the swings, the grass under our seats tickling our soles smoothly. Afterwards, we skipped home, swinging our shoes by the laces.

"Want a piece of gum?" Caroline asked me from the other side of the cab. I nodded my head, and she threw a stick at me. Caroline and I chewed the gum very quietly. She looked at the cab driver's back and shushed me when I tried to speak. She was pulling completely into herself, into some place I could never reach.

"Look, Caroline—"

"Shhhh!" she whispered, her eyes not touching my face.

"This is important. Next time we go to a movie, could we go to a cheap one? So I don't have to ask my parents for money?"

"You could always get a job," she said stiffly.

"I can't find one. I told you I tried, Caroline—" I smoothed the sweat on my forehead. "Caroline, I filled out a hundred applications. There aren't all that many jobs."

"I found one," she said darkly, still staring at her red hands.

"Just because you—"

"Shhhhh!" she hissed. "There's always a job at a restaurant. I'm sure you could get a job as a waitress."

"I'd *hate* that kind of job."

"That's not *my* problem. That's *your* problem."

"But I'm your best friend!"

"So? What does that have to do with anything? You don't have to go to the movies with me. I'll go with someone else."

"But . . . ," I burst in, leaning across the seat in frustration. "Why don't you understand?"

"I don't want to discuss it anymore," she finished, inspecting the straps of her sandal. Just like so many times before, she raised her head high and pulled her knees to her body. Like the notes she passed during class, where she would fold her words and caricatures on the inside so that nobody could see them but me, Caroline folded in on herself. Just like a piece of paper, she would crumple herself together and hide away from everyone. Then she would sit under the night sky or at the party or in the classroom and sulk, the anger clinging to her face like strands of bubblegum.

"Are you all right?" I asked.

"I'm fine," she mumbled and stared straight ahead.

The driver turned along a road I didn't recognize. The car was stifling as I fidgeted beside Caroline and worried about the cab driver. Was he really going to kidnap us? *Where* was he driving us? The front seat creaked as he moved, the springs bulging through the fabric. The man brought his hand up to his head and scratched his flaky hair. I met his eyes in the rearview mirror, and they looked bloody and crazed. I knew one could tell a criminal by his eyes.

"Are you sure you're okay?" I asked Caroline with shaking lips.

"Yeah," she muttered.

It reminded me of an old freckled friend with closets full of sparkly clothes to wear and glittery high-heeled shoes and shiny necklaces and crowns. We would dress up and play queen for hours. But then she had become sick, and when she came to visit, she was half my size. When we had climbed the stairs to my doorway, she had held both my outreached forefingers in her small blue hands, leaning forward as she had jerkily moved her knee to the right and her foot to the left. She had looked at me through her mushroom-colored eyes, and she had said she knew she was sick when she turned blue one day and just never got warm.

I hadn't known what to say, so I had said nothing. I had just smiled awkwardly. I hadn't been able to talk to her; I had been too embarrassed. I just hadn't known her anymore. But then when she had left, I had cried because I knew I had failed her. She had come to me for a friend, and I hadn't been one, because I hadn't been able to enjoy being around her. She wrote me lots of post cards, but I never wrote back to her.

As I looked at Caroline, I bit my thumb hard to try to forget what kept running through my mind—I hadn't tried to get to know my old friend again; I had decided to distance myself. All those capsules, splints and breathing problems had scared me away, and I had lost a friend. . . .

I wanted to ask Caroline if we were going the right way, but she was silent, so I didn't. I licked my dry lips and put my cool palms on my warm cheeks. ***Why*** was Caroline angry? Why couldn't she talk to me? I was her best friend. She *said* I was her best friend.

"We're here," Caroline said, and she smiled a little, looking in my eyes. She stretched out. I looked out the window and she was right; the cab driver was braking slowly in front of Caroline's driveway. Caroline already had her money out.

"How much is it?" I asked, and Caroline said it was five dollars for me. I gave her the money and quickly got out of the cab. The scorching asphalt was damp, and I watched the reflection of the fiery street lamp on separate, flat pebbles. Then Caroline finished paying the cab driver, and the man slowly drove away, the engine rattling and the threadbare tires on his car making dry marks on the street.

"You want to stay out here for a minute?" Caroline asked in a hushed voice, looking up at the stars.

"Yeah," I said. She sat on her steps, and I put my sweater down and sat on it beside her. "Did you give him a tip?" I asked suddenly.

"Yeah, I let him keep the change from my twenty. Only ten dollars."

"A ten dollar tip?"

"You saw him," Caroline shrugged. "I felt really sorry for him. He really needed the money."

I thought back for a moment. His clothes had been faded, and the radio had earlier been removed from the dashboard, leaving a gaping hole. I remembered the tired way he had asked for Caroline's address. "What's the address, ma'am?" he had asked scratchily.

"Yes," I answered finally. "I saw him." He had seemed in pretty bad shape. But instead of feeling sorry that a human being had to do such boring work and not even earn enough money for good clothes or new upholstery, I had worried that he might kill us. I had never thought about ***him***.

Mike Derzon

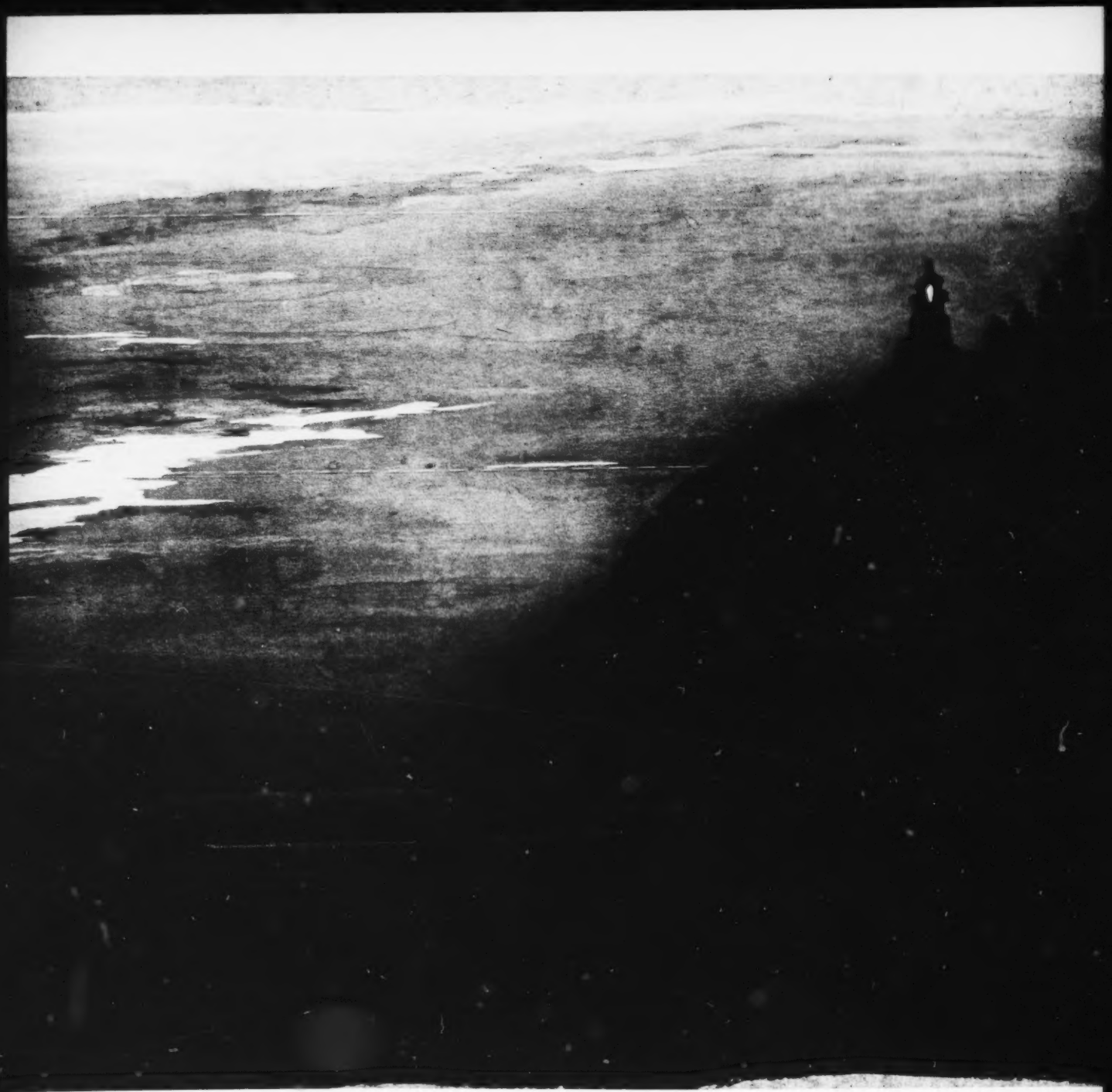
"Did you see how tired he was? I bet he had been working since early this morning. And he couldn't have made a lot of money. He looked as if he never had any business. And did you see the match?"

"What about it?" I asked.

"He had to light a match to look at his map and find my house. A *match*. He didn't have the money to buy batteries for the car light." I tried to remember exactly what had happened. I knew he had lit a match, but I thought . . . yes, he had held the match up to something on the dashboard, beside the picture, and studied it for a split second, before he cupped his hand on the other side of the match and blew.

"I knew he needed the money more than I," she said, and I looked up at her animated face, fast in motion, like the beginning of a fire when only the newspaper was burning. While her face moved as if it were shrouded in heat waves, I thought about the curlicue of smoke that had drifted up from his match. As the cab driver's hands had moved upwards in a smooth arch, the oily fingers had trembled. Then the match had lit up something that could have been a yellow, folded paper that had been taped right under the photograph. While I thought about it, I remembered seeing faint lines transversing each other on what could have been the map. A hot breath of wind from outside had made the paper flutter with a gentle crackle.

I looked at Caroline sitting silently on the step, her eyes turned towards the bright house across the street. As quiet as the night, smoke was slipping out of the chimney and rising in beautiful shapes to the sky. Caroline was mesmerized by the smoke that was pouring out of the house like long grey feathers. I watched her face for a while before she turned and caught my stare, realizing that tonight I had seen some compassion in her that I'd never known was there. Never even *guessed* was there. As if someone had held a lit match up to her face, and suddenly I could see it.



Emily Stussi

With Respect to a Writer

—△

A writer is a god. His kingdom of paper lies before him; his magic pen, his power. He controls time and space: he controls destiny. None can hurt him, none can control him, and his power is forever pure. Satan could perish at his fingertips, kings could cower, magic could thrive, and the world could be tranquil. The writer shall rule until his book is closed.

100

They Call Me a Poet?

Emotions
Held prisoner inside
a strong
tank
of armor

Unable
to let themselves
out
although they have
the key

Words
blankly written on
a page
with so much feeling
yet so little
Meaning

a Squirrel
soaring above
while
a sparrow scampers
beneath

Backwards emotions
from a
convoluted brain
of Hope

the Useless Floundering
of pen
on paper must
Cease.

—the dreamer

102

Escarpment

the rocks piled jaggedly
building toward the sky
from the shifting shores
of the icy blue river;
the water sparkled
    and slipped over the smooth,
        rounded boulders.
we stared up at the stony peaks
then uninvited we scaled the walls
    to touch the sky and laugh
    at the river crawling far below
until the mountaintop claimed us
    and stole our freedom
    and blew it into the wind
    to land on the distant shore.
I wanted to fly
but the fantasy made me dizzy
and afraid
and I was caught in the trees
trying to escape.
you held a green spaghetti snake
in your hand
but let it slither away
before I could touch it
I touched your hand instead
    but the struggle was over
    already
  and I couldn't feel the freedom
of the snake
as it trickled down the hill
and blended like a whisper
    into the scaly bark
        and withering grass.

—Emily Kaufman

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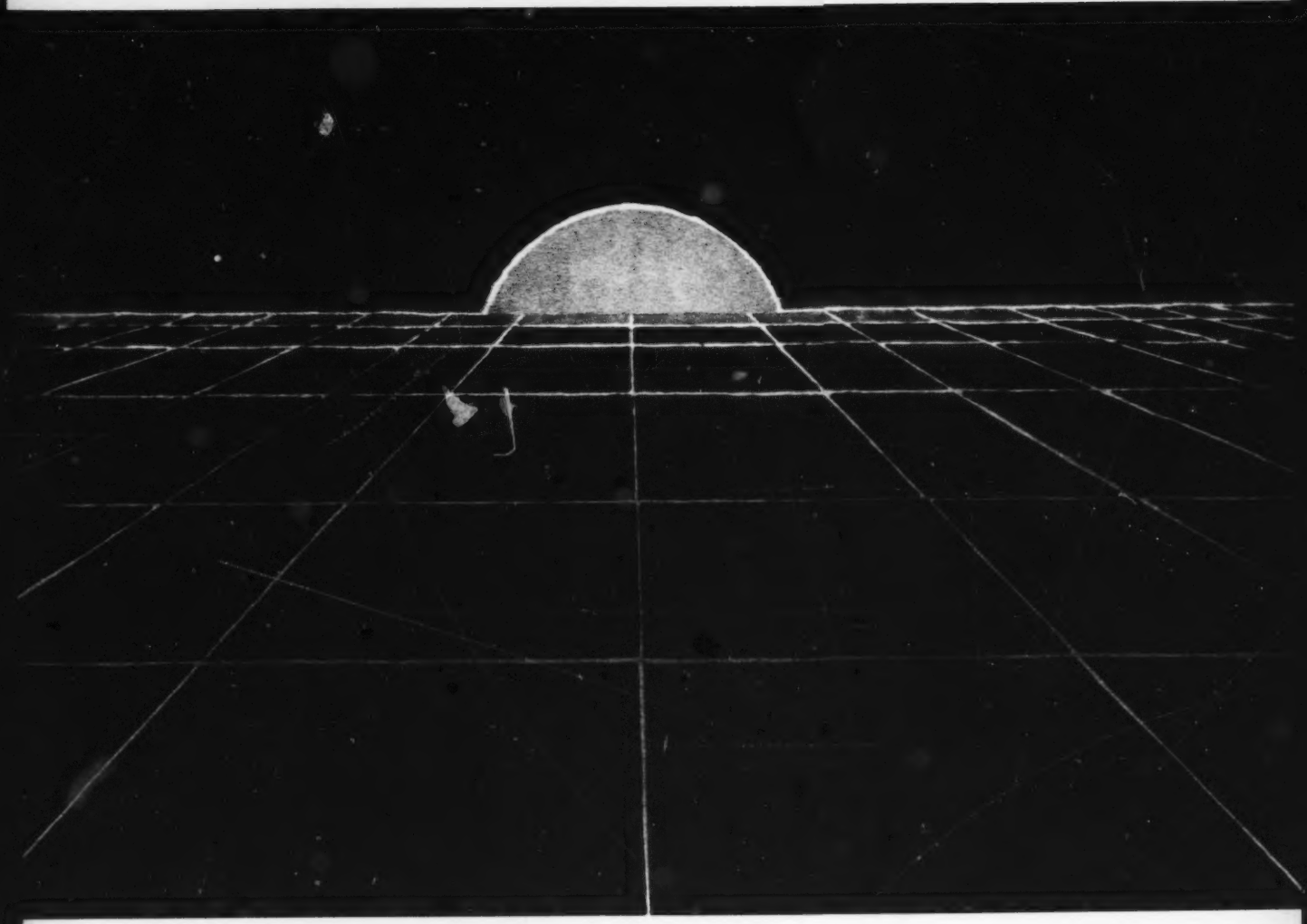

Eric Ostroff

Window of Perspective

When pressures,
And rules,
And deadlines,
And all things tangible
And insignificant
Attack my sanity,
I open my window of perspective
And look out on life—
An immense sky
That engulfs all,
Leaving specks of blue behind
So that I will remember.

—Jenny Burris

Rhoda Bouma

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